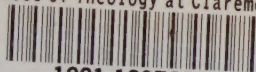
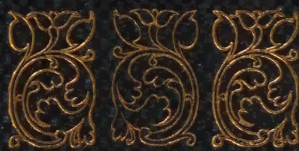


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CALLS TO
HOLINESS



H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE



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CALLS TO HOLINESS

CALLS TO HOLINESS

BY

H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE

*Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, and Vicar of
St. Paul's, Onslow Square*

(AUTHOR OF "THE VICTORIOUS LIFE"; "THE LIFE OF PRIVILEGE";
"ALL ONE"; &c.)

*"As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy
in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be
ye holy, for I am holy."—1 PETER i. 15, 16.*

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PREFACE.

IN permitting these “Motto Sermons : or, New Years Addresses” to be published—under the title of “Calls to Holiness”—I am but yielding to the urgent requests of friends, many of whom heard the sermons when originally delivered, and repeatedly asked that some, at least, should be brought together by publication ; others of whom did not hear, but have desired to read the addresses because they had received copies of the “Motto Cards” on which the sermons were in each case based. It has been my happy privilege to offer such a New Year’s Greeting for twenty-four years to my congregation at St. Paul’s, Onslow Square, and some thousands of the cards are now distributed each year. The following sermons are but specimens of those delivered in connection with the “Motto Cards,” and, having been taken down by a member of the congregation and published locally by request, they are now offered to my friends who may possess the “Motto Cards” (and to any wider circle that may accept these reports) as the result of the kind efforts made by my friend, the reporter, and by another

who has generously attempted to revise them. To the general public I can only venture to convey my sincere apology if the sermons should be found altogether lacking in literary merit, and therefore disappointing to the critical reader. May I be permitted to say that they were delivered entirely without manuscript, and as words spoken from the heart to an attentive congregation; and not having been revised by the preacher, they have but one claim upon the attention of the public—that they represent the earnest attempt of the speaker, first, to bring souls into peace through “the blood of the Lamb,” and secondly, to lead to whole-hearted consecration through the power of the Holy Ghost. Should the reading of this little volume lead even one to these blessings, I shall be more than grateful to the two friends who have assisted me, and shall render all the praise and the glory to God.

H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE.

25 ONSLOW GARDENS, LONDON.

January, 1900.

1890.

BEHOLD!

St. John i. 29.—“Behold the Lamb of God.”

St. John xix. 5.—“Behold the Man.”

St. John xix. 14.—“Behold your King.”

Psalm xlv. 11.—“For He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.”

B E H O L D !

I MAY commence my words by offering you my earnest prayer that God may speed you throughout the year, and bestow upon you all the most abundant blessings He has to give, both for time and eternity : blessings of the basket, and blessings of the store ; blessings of the body, and and blessings of the soul ; blessings on the parent, and blessings on the child ; blessings on the employer, and blessings on the employed ; and right sure I am that this earnest and heartfelt prayer can only have its fulfilment in exact proportion as each one of us is able to adopt and carry out in earnest the threefold charge which I have taken as my text, and to understand the blessed cause why we should behold the Lord Jesus as it is developed for us in the words of our motto. This, my brethren, is our practical privilege. We are told to *behold the Lamb of God*, to *behold the Man*, to *behold our King*, for *He is our Lord*, and we are bidden to *worship Him*. There are many different words that might have been

taken and placed before you as our motto during the ensuing twelve months, but there is this peculiar difficulty in the minister's choice: that he has to choose, if God will give them to him, certain particular words that shall be suggestive from time to time of fresh thought and instruction, and yet shall be so simple that even the coldest and most careless shall be compelled as it were to hear the voice of the living God calling upon him to accept salvation. It is with this purpose that I choose, as far as God will enable me, such plain, simple, declaratory words as these, in which the voice of the Lord, I think, must be heard speaking, and every man who beholds them must feel that he is being as it were invited to look upon the Lord Jesus as his own peculiar, personal Saviour.

There cannot be need of any great amount of proof, brethren, this morning to shew that it is indeed in these three great characters that the Lord Jesus Christ is always set before us as the Way, the Truth, and the Life for our souls' salvation, and that the one great thing every man has to do is simply to accept what God is putting before him; so that there remains nothing this morning for the preacher but just to enforce the solemn exhortation which the motto card lays before us, and to shew how it is, as far as God will enable us, that we are to behold this blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ in these three great relations, by which we shall find that He brings unto us all the blessings of salva-

tion, whether required for the past, the present, or the future.

So far as I am aware, these are the only three particular characteristics in which we are called upon in the New Testament Scriptures to look upon the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with this word "behold." It is a remarkable fact, too, that they should all be found in the Gospel of St. John, and that they should come before us exactly in the order, in which, in the teaching of all other parts of Scripture, we are required ever to take the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

For there are many who would reverse this order in proceeding to consider the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is for this that I am so thankful, though man may call it an accident, that these words come as they do in this particular order, for we are oftentimes invited to look upon the Lord Jesus Christ as a Man first, and to see in Him one who, by the grace of God, was enabled to live a pure, holy, spotless, blessed life, and to take Him for our example, and walk in His most blessed steps, and obey His commandments, which were so perfect and grand; but the law of the Lord is undefiled, the word of the Lord is good, as well as the order of the Lord, and in these there is no such thing as accident, and right true it must be, I think, if we study God's Scripture, that the first duty, the first privilege, of every poor, helpless sinner, is to contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God

which taketh away the sin of the world; and then, when he has learnt what that blessed word involves, and has beheld the Lamb of God, so as to really rejoice in Him as his Saviour, a true, personal Saviour from sin, then he may behold the Man, the patient, the gentle, the lowly, the loving, the wonderful example; for of all men that have ever appeared upon the face of the earth, He is the one we should follow; and then, lastly, he may behold the King, Who, coming hereafter in His glory, as we believe, shall take to Himself His great power and reign, and shall call upon them that have believed in Him to rise and reign with Him for ever and ever.

But it is not until we have first beheld the Lamb that we shall ever know the power of the Man, or ever be enabled to submit ourselves to the King; and it is for this cause that I thank God that the order in the Scriptures is this particular order in which, exactly according to the needs of human nature, Christ Jesus has come to meet us and to supply all our need.

I am not unmindful of the fact that, in the Old Testament Scriptures, we have (and by a remarkable coincidence, one of them came before us in our service this morning) two other passages in which we are called to "behold" the Lord Jesus. The first is in Isaiah xl. 9: "Behold your God," and the other appears in the first verse of this morning's lesson (Isaiah xlii. 1): "Behold My servant." These represent the two special characteristics of the Messiah which,

under the Old Testament dispensation, it was needful for man to realize. They must learn that He should come as the God-Man, "Emmanuel," who should take upon Him the form of a servant, in obedience to the gracious will of God; and now it is only necessary to contemplate Him for our souls' salvation as the Lamb, the Man, and the King; and while we ever recognize this fact, that all true preaching is intended to have but one great purpose, and that is to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ and bring Him glory and honour, let us never forget that this is best done, not by the declaration of mere abstract truths, as to the magnificence and glory, the perfection and beauty, of Christ Jesus Himself, but rather by bringing forward all the characteristics in which He meets the need of a fallen race.

And this is why the theme that I have chosen this morning seems so peculiarly appropriate to us poor sinners. We want the Lamb; we want the Man; we want the King: and, as we take Christ Jesus for these three, we shall assuredly not only be saved from wrath, but saved from sin, and saved by God's grace to magnify Him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His.

What, then, mean we when we say, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"? We mean just this, I believe, that the prime need of every man that ever walked upon the face of this earth, with the exception of the Man Christ Jesus, is that some way should be provided for him by which he may have access to

God, which he has not by nature ; some way by which he may be brought into the relation of peace with God, which he is conscious in his own soul he does not possess ; some way by which he may be lifted out of this degradation into which the whole race has fallen, and may be made partaker of the favour of God, from which he has been excluded by the action of evil ; and this is exactly what is brought before us here in these words, " Behold the Lamb of God."

There comes an awakening, I believe, to every man's soul, however long it may be postponed, that he cannot meet God in any righteousness of his own, that he cannot face God with anything which he has done, and that therefore there must be some other ; and who shall it be ?

Oh, beloved, it is as we take up this blessed picture which John Baptist brings before us when he points to the person of Jesus Christ, and realize that in Him there is the actual antitype of the great lamb that was provided as Isaac's substitute on Mount Moriah ; secondly, of the great lamb-sacrifices in Egypt to deliver Israel, first from the wrath of God by the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts, and then from death by means of its flesh being their food, and so Israel were delivered and brought forth as God's people ; and thirdly, of that wonderful lamb set before us in the 53rd of Isaiah, the Lamb who for our sins is set before the world to be scorned, despised, rejected, that He might by His self-sacrifice bear the sins of many and justify all who believe on

Him ; it is just when we look thus at the Lord Jesus Christ as poor, helpless souls and see in Him the God-Man Emmanuel, God with us, in the form of manhood and in the true manhood bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, that then the poor, helpless, miserable sinner fears not judgment, but rests in peace and can face God with satisfaction.

This is why I appeal to my people, day by day throughout this year, to have placed before them in a prominent position the blessed word of God the Holy Ghost, as I believe, through John Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God"; so to have it placed prominently in your homes that it may be a constant reminder to yourselves, first, of the unspeakable blessing of having One who has made peace with God through His own precious blood ; so to have it placed prominently in your homes that it may be a constant token to them that visit you that you are not ashamed of the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God who has made peace with God for your helpless soul ; so to have it placed prominently in your homes that it may, by the grace of God, be a constant invitation to those who perchance may be waiting one day to see you, or who may be standing up carelessly for a moment and be struck by God's word, who have never yet taken to themselves this unspeakable gift of God, but who suddenly, with the eye of the soul opened by the Spirit of the Lord, may see anew these words, upon which the sunlight may flash and illumine the golden

letters, "Behold the Lamb of God," and may enter into peace through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

Yes, and remember that it is not only the Lamb of Moriah, once typified in Isaac's case; not only the Lamb of Egypt, once typified by the Passover Lamb; nor only the Lamb of Isaiah, once announced by prophecy; but that He remains the Lamb by His perpetual atonement. He is the Lamb of God, given, that is by God, well pleasing unto God, accepted of God in our place; and He "takes away" sin. It remains one everlasting truth, while sin remains upon earth, the Lamb of God "is taking away" the sin, not only sins, remember, just this sin and that sin, but He "takes away," bears off in His own body from mankind, as in one great, unspeakable condensation, the "sin of the world." And we will have no limitation to that; God helping us, we will never malign Christ by implying that He has come to save a few; we will never let it be said that the grace of God was limited; that "world" means just this individual or that individual whom God has picked out with tokens of His favour. No, my brethren, let us take the whole fulness of the word of God, and point every sinner to the truth that it is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world*."

But then, does this mean that we may continue in sin because grace has abounded; does it bring before us license for iniquity, that shall make the man who wants to commit sin carelessly reckon

that he is at liberty to transgress the will of God? No, God forbid; for assuredly the moment we understand the meaning of the words, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," we recognize this, that He hath put away not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin; and that as He is continually taking away sin, so He is hereafter to complete this mighty work He is accomplishing, and to take away even the very existence of sin; and, therefore, our souls must call us to consider the deep meaning of the words which now have new force, "Behold the Man."

Take your stand and behold Him for a moment, His face covered with shame and spitting, His brow all crushed and torn with the cruel thorns, and the blood streaming down so sadly upon His form, whom every man that stands by has dared to scorn, except perhaps one or two struck with amazement at such a Man; and consider, my brethren, Who He is, that He has given up voluntarily all the glory, that He may take upon Him the real form—not merely the figure—of a man, and that He stands before us there as the one Man of whom alone the Father could say that He is well pleasing unto Him because of His perfect righteousness.

And then, what see we as we behold the Man? We behold what, under the conditions of sin, God meant every man to be. We behold the very perfect example, the only one that ever has existed, of what God would have poor sinners

take as their pattern, their power for the true manhood, when once they have entered into the realization of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It is to behold the Man now that we may take our stand and see in Him what we may and should be.

There are just certain peculiar characteristics in the manner and words and work of Christ, that day which, perhaps, of all others are the ones that we most need. The gentleness, the tenderness, the humility, the patience, the self-abnegation, the wondrous tokens of love to His enemies, these are the things that least of all we poor, fallen creatures seem even to aspire to or consider to be possible for man. And yet there stands the perfect Man, and as we behold Him as our example, oh, think, my brethren, what the Holy Ghost would have us learn through the involuntary lips of Pilate, as the man of the world, as to the iniquity of sin, as to the degradation of sin, as to the curse of sin, as to the ruin which sin brings. And we behold the Man; and as we look upon Christ Jesus this morning, if there be one single sin that we are committing wilfully, let us ask: "Can it be? Can it be?" that we even desire any longer to wound afresh the Son of God, who has given himself to be the Son of Man; and remember how, as we take up the words "Ecce Homo" and put it under the figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, He is given to us as the great example of what God desires to see in every one of us in this life.

Well said the great German poet, "that picture of the Man has worked its way into the heart of Christianity as no other in this world ever has done. That head that was covered with shame and sadness, that head that was full of wounds and blood, that head that in mockery had its thorny crown, that it is which touches the heart of all mankind when really they see it." And you remember, doubtless, the story of the picture in the Düsseldorf Gallery, which Count Zinzendorf saw, with the words written beneath, "I bore all this for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" and how that turned that man from carelessness into a true trophy of the grace of God.

And now, this morning, I call upon my people and myself to behold the Man; and then in your homes, when there is anything of an inclination to sin, when there is anything which you feel is calling you away from the Cross of Christ to go back to the spirit of worldliness, go for a moment with that Man into the wilderness of temptation, and see Him as man triumphant over the devil; see Him again in the hour of His trial, and learn what God can enable a man to be; and as you behold the Man, let God touch your heart, and may you say, "Thus, by the grace of God, may I be able to follow, because God the Holy Ghost has taken possession of my soul."

One more thought. When we look upon that Man Christ Jesus, let us never forget that there it is that we get true sympathy, there it is that we get true comfort, when trials, troubles, sorrows

are upon us, and, throughout the year, which of us can say that we must not look forward to our share of distress ; and when suddenly you rise from your chair and move towards the chimney-piece, with the feeling, "I must stand, I must move, I cannot sit, I must do something" ; then may God, of His infinite mercy, let your eyes just light upon these words, as you keep this prominently upon the chimney-piece in your room, "Behold the Man !"

The Man Christ Jesus is so tender, so pitiful ; oh, be not afraid, that Man is thy Friend, thy Brother ; He hath in all points been tempted like as thou art, yet without sin. Oh, trust the sympathy of the Man Christ Jesus, my brother, and then thou wilt be fitted to learn the lesson that comes with the third great appeal to thy soul, "Behold your King."

I know the words were uttered in mockery, if we rightly understand them from Pilate's lips, but surely we may learn even from an enemy. God made the proud governor to speak that day ! Even as He once made the ass of Balaam to speak, so He made the heathen in his scorn to bring forth the very truth of the Lord Jehovah.

Aye, remember this, the Lord Jesus saves as the "Lamb of God," but He also lived and died to give us an example, and to show the true meaning of manhood, that He may now say to every one of us (though He says it so humbly that we may easily fail to observe it), "Keep My commandments, even as I have kept My Father's

commandments. Be loving, as I have loved you. I have served My Father as 'My King'; ye, too, are to serve Me now as the King whom God hath anointed in heaven and earth." And let us never forget that we are thus saved to serve, not in a limited monarchy in which we are perpetually seeking to direct the King, but to be governed, to be dictated to absolutely, by the Lord Jesus Christ every moment of our lives, and thus to place beneath His feet all that we call our own, and all that we are, and every day and every hour of our lives to let Jesus be the Dictator over everything that concerns His subjects.

Yet one glance more. We want to look at Him as God the Father hath placed Him to-day. He hath placed Him at His own right hand in the majesty on high, and made Him King in heaven and upon earth.

How remarkable it is to look into the Psalms and find always that God is the one who is to be crowned King. Everywhere we see it; in Psalm ii. 6, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill at Zion"; in Psalm xxiv. 9, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in"; and many of the Psalms are filled with this blessed thought, more especially, perhaps, that touching Psalm from which I have taken my last words purposely, and not by haphazard. I have specially chosen those words, and for this reason, that the other words joined with them are these, "So shall the King greatly

desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." The King will love you, the King will bless you, the King will be sure to be your companion, and make you His own for ever, just in proportion to the measure in which you forget your own father's house and all else that would come between you and Him, and yield yourselves heart and mind, and soul and body to Him Who has the right to you altogether. He bought you to be His own. And so, whenever the question arises, as it will arise—even in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ it arose—"Shall I serve the things of this world and take the kingdoms which Satan offers me?"—(for Christ Jesus had them all spread out before Him, as we heard in this morning's lesson)—"All the kingdoms of the world will I give unto you." Shall I take? Shall I take? Let the answer be, "Behold your King!" and whenever the temptation comes strong upon you, look up and lift up your heads, and remember that if once you trust Him your redemption draweth nigh, and Jesus is saying, as the 65th of Isaiah, "I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name" originally; but He has called you now by His name as His people, His Beloved, and every one of you is called to serve the King in spirit and in truth.

And so we close with this solemn thought, that these words are intended to have their daily application. What mean we when we make use of that word "Behold"? We mean attention

that is to be attracted by the beauty of the form ; we mean admiration that is to be excited by the perfection of the person ; we mean adoration, because He is our Lord and we must give Him worship ; we mean obedience, because He has a right to our submission ; and we mean to submit ourselves absolutely, because He hath saved us and cleansed us for His own, and we are prepared to surrender all to Him.

It is for this I have chosen this motto, for I verily believe I speak to people who know the scheme of salvation quite as fully as the minister, perhaps far more so, God knows ; but I speak to many who have one step further still to go. Beloved brethren, I want my people to be sanctified to the Lord for ever. I want you to be all for God and wholly Christ's. I want you alive from this day. I want your money, I want your time, I want your talents, I want your health, I want your family, for God. Look through the things now that are attractive, and are drawing your heart away from God, and say, "Behold the Lamb! He died to save me. Can I keep back aught from Him? Behold the Man! am I like Him? Oh my God, what a life I have lived! Behold my King! As King He has a right to my body, soul, and spirit, to command me in everything. Shall I draw back from Him now?

And when shall I behold Him? "I have set the Lord *always* before me. He is at my right hand, then I shall not be moved."

Yes, and wherewith shall I serve Him? My

brethren, I will serve Him with my worship. "He is thy Lord and worship thou Him." Give Him the soul's admiration, and there will be no difficulty whatever in judging among men whether you belong to the Lord or not.

Now, is it a matter of compromise with you? Says one to the minister (and it comes so often), 'Do you mean to deny me my little pleasures? May I never go to this or that worldly amusement?' Thank God, I never have to pronounce judgment in such matters. "Judge not that ye be not judged." I am not your judge, but I thank God I may turn you now to a printed motto which, so long as the minister lives, will certainly not be wholly destroyed (some copies at least will be left for years to come), and I turn you to this motto, and I say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" "Behold the Man!" "Behold your King!" and take Him. Take Him as your King and Lord, and worship Him, and now let Him decide, let Him *decide*. Oh, if your hearts are sad with sin, let us close with this word, "Behold the Lamb!" and take God's peace through His blood; it shall excite your gratitude, your devotion. Are you sorely in need of a supporter and friend? Are you utterly alone in the world, and feel the lack of sympathy? "Behold the Man!" It should excite your thankfulness, your awe. Are you in danger of being ensnared and cut off from the Lord by any temptations of the world, the flesh, or the devil? "Behold your King!" "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only

shalt thou serve." "Behold your King!" and evermore, from day to day, as the time of temptation and trial comes, let Satan find us guarded by the very presence of the Lord Jehovah, because He is thy Lord, not only, remember, as Ruler, but as the Lord that made us, bought us, claims us, rules us, undertakes to keep us. He has a right to be trusted, and so I may say surely, adopting Pilate's words as the means of the best application I can make of my text to your souls, "Behold, I bring Him forth unto you. What shall I do, then, with Jesus, which is called Christ?"

1891.

YOUR LIFE.

St. James iv. 14.—“What is your life? . . . A vapour.”

Colossians iii. 1, 3.—“If risen . . . your life is hid
with Christ in God.”

YOUR LIFE.

OUR Motto for the New Year into which we are now entering is found in two passages, the first of which occurs in the 4th chapter of the Epistle of St. James, at the 14th verse. "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And again in the Colossian Epistle the 3rd chapter and the 1st and 3rd verses. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Thus solemn and striking is the contrast as drawn by the Holy Spirit of God, between the things that are temporal and the things that are spiritual; between things that concern bodily existence and things that concern true spiritual life. The one appearing—and the word means far more in the original than our idea of appearing,

it means simply appearing as an empty form or figure—appearing for a little time without any reality and then vanishing away; the other as solid and enduring as the unchangeable God Himself. The one just putting forth as it were the mere idea of existence, deceiving men from day to day with the expectation of hope, that they have something real and that it will ere long be theirs; and the other actually partaking of the very life of the great God, and therefore as absolutely eternal and as perfect as the life that God Himself possesses.

This, brethren, is the contrast that I would seek to enforce; this the thought that I wish to impress by the grace of God upon your hearts this morning; and then with the constant reminder before your eyes, if you will kindly accept the motto card as a gift from your minister, I trust that the words may be made a lesson—a yearlong lesson if God should spare you, or a lifelong lesson if God should take you before the close of the year—not only to yourself but to all that visit you, or before whom you may be placed.

But while I draw a striking contrast between things temporal and spiritual, let me not be misunderstood as having adopted two texts that present a striking contrast in themselves without any connection. I believe there is one very striking point of contrast, and a very striking connection also, between these two texts, and it is for this purpose that I have chosen them as our motto for this year.

Any contrast might suffice, if that was all that was required, but the contrast that draws our thoughts from earth to heaven, and that links the two in one, is what is so striking in God's Book, and the contrast here being an exceedingly solemn link, as I believe, is also marvellously blessed; and it is this—"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in in me"—I live the life that perishes and is vanishing as a vapour; but Christ liveth in me the life that is everlasting and perfect, and "though our outward man perish yet our inward man is renewed day by day"; this is the link, thank God, between the two.

It would have been solemn enough, perhaps, to have called my people's attention to the thought that the life they live on the earth is like a vapour; it might have been blessed to call attention to the life eternal that is to be lived for all eternity, that is hid for us this day with Christ in God; but, if the two were severed, we should have lacked the counsel of them both. If the two were severed, we should have lacked the blessed union that comes to our souls down here upon earth, and then draws us on to enter into the fulness of what God in Christ has done upon our behalf.

And so my purpose is, this day, to show the full reality of the connection and of the contrast. First, the solemn reality that there is in each of us what was called life, and of course in one sense it is a life that is neither more nor less than a vanishing vapour; and then there is in some—God knows how many, and I pray God it may be in all

before we part this day—a life that is as absolutely beautiful as the life that the Son of God knows (it is His own)—a life that knows no change except in one blessed sense to pass onward, upward, heavenward, Godward, until it becomes as perfect in its possibilities as God can make the creature. This is what we need to be reminded of more and more every year that we are given upon earth—that the life that now is is perpetually perishing; that man is no sooner born into the world than he has to begin the act of dying, and that one long struggle against the action of death is all that the creature can know in the body; whereas, in the life that God bestows in His Son Jesus Christ, instead of the perpetual action of death that works its terrible will more direfully every day, until at last it accomplishes itself in all its awful realities, this life ripens on, on, on, without any let or hindrance, without any real interruption by the mere fact of our being translated from this sphere to another—and that we are not to think of *that* as death, but merely falling asleep in Jesus, and shaking off that which would hinder our blessing rather than that which gives us blessing—and then all onward through God's eternity to get nearer, nearer, nearer to the great high God Himself in His glory. Surely the ambition is enough to touch you. Surely the prospect is enough to attract your souls. Surely it ought to stir the hearts of all when we think that in place of our own natural lives there is to be found, as the gift of God, such absolute and eternal satisfaction.

But, in order that we should bring about the full realization of blessing offered to us this day in Christ Jesus, it is, of course, essential that we should establish first the contrast in its full force to our souls. And of the life that now is, what can the minister say that will not be described as trite, and worn, and commonplace? Who is there of all my hearers this day who does not realize—at least, theoretically—that the life we live now in the flesh is a life of perpetual uncertainty, and of the utmost possible brevity? We are always being met with facts, and always theorizing upon this subject. And if there never had been one single sermon preached through all the six thousand years that men have dwelt upon the earth concerning the awful uncertainty of the present existence, and the tremendous certainty that death is at hand, death itself would have preached its sermons; for men have come and have gone, and millions after millions have proved the power of this death by the action he has exercised on them. He has preached his own discourses to every generation that has lived upon this earth; and so, my brethren, words are needless if facts are studied.

But, strange to say, so subtle is the human heart, so powerful the workings of Satan in the natural man, that he can prevent us—and the natural heart is glad to be prevented—from dwelling upon the fact that we have to die, and, therefore, with a subtlety of wisdom that we cannot understand, men seem to shake off the

thought that they themselves are mortal, while admitting that others are: they acknowledge the latter, but deny the former, practically; and so hide, as it were, their heads in the sand, and think that they have escaped the pursuing foe.

And yet, beloved, in addition to the fact, there stands the Word of God, filled with two lines of thought from end to end:

“Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble,”
but

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life,”

and, strange to say, when men decline to observe the fact—although the awful fact of death is ever ringing in our ears and appearing before our eyes, especially in this great city of London—they also seek to avoid the truth of God’s Holy Word and to evade the solemn announcements God has made. And, therefore, it becomes essential that ministers of the gospel, called to preach God’s great truth, should be perpetually enforcing the awful fact that man must die speedily unless Christ Jesus comes in His glory; and the only wonder is that any sermon should ever be preached—that any man who is called a minister of the Gospel can dare to stand up and profess to announce God’s truth—without seeking to enforce in some way this tremendous fact, that man is perpetually dying, however strong his frame may seem, and that there is never the privilege of knowing that we have life except and

until we have the privilege of knowing that we are in Christ Jesus.

And as we turn to the Word of God and ask ourselves how God has sought to enforce this fact, it is strange indeed that men can resist the striking similes brought before us in this Book. It may suffice, perhaps, to take the thoughts brought before us by the patriarch Job, who, when God struck him down, came to the conviction—although afterwards he might live many years on this earth beyond what he had hoped—that, as a creature, his life was nothing but a mere, empty shadow.

Look, for instance, at chap. vii. 6, where he says :

“ My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.”

What a wonderful figure that gives us, as perhaps the most rapid motion that was known to the ancients.

Again, in the 7th verse he says, “ Oh, remember that my life is wind ! ” Perhaps, again, the most mighty force—sweeping over the land, leaving nothing but death and destruction behind—that Job could appeal to as a figure of terrible power until it passes away.

Again, in chap. ix. 25, he says, “ Now my days are swifter than a post.” Of course we all know that travelling was slow in the ancient days, with but one exception, and those figures of eastern posts, mounted on their swift dromedaries, are familiar to us all, as brought before us, for instance, in the book of Esther, when

Haman sent forth his messengers of death, and Mordecai sent out after him his messengers still more rapidly, "being hastened and pressed on by the King's commandment." And we are told by an ancient Greek writer (Herodotus) that there is absolutely nothing mortal that hastens forward to its destination with such speed as these carriers of despatches hurrying across the desert; and, therefore, the very idea of a post to the eastern mind would mean the figure of a solitary man on a camel hastening across the desert as if life and death hung upon the issue of his message, and the speed with which it can be delivered.

It is all pressing forward: and that is Job's idea of the close of his days—that they flee away, they see no good, he says; and then, in the next verse (ix. 26), he goes again into another figure, and he says that his days are as swift ships—or ships of desire, as it is in the margin—the ships that have all sail set, and are hastening forward as if everything must be subordinate and made subservient to the one end of getting forward to the port of their desire, or of their fears—God knows which. And then, once again, not only are they like the swift ships, but he tells us that he has no figure sufficient to bring before us the tremendous speed with which they are going. Swift as the post, swift as a ship, and then, once again, he says they are swifter than "an eagle that hasteth to the prey." Observe the eagle in the air, see that prey beneath it, and the lightning-like rapidity

with which it swoops from above and comes down with the certainty of destruction upon the creature, and that is exactly how Job realized the passage of his days.

And, therefore, if the figure of a post, and if the figure of the swift ships, brought before the patriarch's mind the rapidity of the flight of his days, and the rapid way in which life upon earth was being passed, surely they bring before us with tenfold force the rapidity of the flight with which this life that we are given is passing from us on earth.

And then, as if that would not suffice, I shall ask you to take the parallel thought that is brought before us in the Apocrypha, in the Wisdom of Solomon, ch. v. 9, where we have this remarkable figure:—He says “All these things (*i.e.*, riches and vaunting) are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasted by, and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel thereof in the waves. Or as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found, but the light air, being beaten with the stroke of her wings and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through and therein afterwards no sign where she went is to be found. Or, like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through. Even so, we in

like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end, and had no sign of virtue to show, but were consumed in our own wickedness. For the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind, like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm, like as the smoke, which is dispersed here and there with the tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day." And then the blessed contrast comes immediately afterwards, to which we would refer in the second part of our thoughts. Such is the teaching of the true Scripture and of the Apocryphal Scripture, the one being doubtless modelled upon the other; but even that will not suffice to show us, perhaps, the intensely solemn truth of the brevity of our existence; so remembering that, should the Lord call, we may have to die this night, and therefore should be living every moment in the full consciousness of the uncertainty of our existence, and let us see, further, the way in which God's Holy Word has piled up figure after figure to show that at any moment our life here on earth may be terminated. Is not this a solemn thought that we have in the Psalmist's expression in the 39th Psalm, and the 6th verse, words which are so constantly read in our burial service, "Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain : he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them"? and also those words in the 90th Psalm and the 9th verse, where he says "We spend our years as a

tale that is told;" and, again, in the 144th Psalm and the 3rd and 4th verses, "Lord, what is man? Man is like to vanity, his days are as a shadow that passeth away," appealing to us by the idea of a dream, a vain shadow, a tale that is told? All this to express this, that just as a tale begins and ends, you know not how or when, it may come at any moment, so the life of man must expect to be taken away in an instant.

And very striking are the words of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in his solemn book upon holy dying. He says, "Wise men of the world have contended as to who shall best describe man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode. Homer calls him 'a leaf,' the smallest and the weakest part of a short-lived, unsteady plant. Pindar calls him 'the dream of a shadow'; another, 'the dream of a shadow of smoke'; but St. James spake by a more excellent spirit, saying, 'Our life is but a vapour,' that is, something drawn from the earth by a heavenly power, made of smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, without virtue in itself, lifted up on high or left below according to the will of the sun, its foster-father. But it is lighter yet. It is not only vapour, it is but an appearing (*φαινομένη*) than which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing, a fantastic vapour, an apparition—nothing real, it is not so much as a mist, not the matter of a shower, not substantial enough to make a cloud, and this, too, only for a little while, and then it vanisheth

away." But, brethren, I need not dwell at length, these extracts must suffice to press in the tremendous solemnity of the first part of our motto.

What is *your* life? The life that you are living here upon earth, and the life of which so many of you are making so much, the life for which you have thought it good to give up, perhaps, your very character in its deep, inward realities, not in the eyes of man, but in the sight of your God, the character wherewith God has endowed you, the peace with which God has blessed you, the possibilities wherewith God has enriched you in order that you may just realize the words of the devil concerning the patriarch Job, when he said to God, "skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Poor fool! Satan sometimes has spoken words of truth, and I grieve to think, concerning my race and myself, how easily we have been brought under his terrible domination; and yet, with this possibility before us, so infinitely more noble, think of the way in which men are now taking that mighty possibility, that endowment wherewith God hath enriched them, and squandering away their inheritance, that little meed of time, the little measure of existence here, the only term of eternity that man has for preparing to meet his Maker.

They tell us we cannot think what eternity means. We can think what ten, twenty, thirty, even up to seventy years may mean as the only opportunity in all eternity that

the creature ever will have of getting ready for the Glory of God, and being made like unto His Son. And yet, my brethren, men will give it up to biting jealousy, men will give it up to worldly follies, men will give it up to self-indulgence of the carnal appetites, laying up treasure that must perish with the fire, and can be swept away in a moment by the breath of God's wind—heaping up treasure, not knowing who shall gather it, and in a moment as the poor fool (it is Christ's word, not mine) as the poor fool piles up his riches, and looks at his barns, and says, "I will take mine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," God's voice descends from the heavens, and says, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided?" This is the man of the world, this is the man that thinks that the bodily life is really living. No, my brethren, no, it is only a hireling existence, a struggle to counteract the influence of our great enemy, our last great enemy, death, and never to succeed, notwithstanding scientific development, notwithstanding the progress of medical arts and powers, never to succeed in prolonging it beyond the measure God has announced as the limits in this world of the life that we may still hope to live in the flesh.

If this be so, then, that you and I ought to realize that what we call life is not life at all, that it is simply a mere parody upon the very idea of life, that it is not even a dignified thought for us to dwell upon, namely, "that we should

be here and call ourselves living creatures," what shall we say when we turn with one glance down upon our motto card? As we look we may see the blessed, splendid contrast that God has established, that while our life on earth is fleeing faster than anything we can imagine, there is—and it may be had this very hour—a life that never has any interruption, but progresses onward and upward, until at last it reaches the throne of God Himself, and this splendid fact is embodied for us in this blessed verse, "if risen . . . your life is hid with Christ in God."

"If risen," I need hardly say that St. Paul is not speaking of what we think of when we use the word "resurrection" in its ordinary sense. He is writing to the Colossian Christians, he speaks to men who were living the life here upon earth, and yet he says to these men, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Therefore, he must imply something that might be known, enjoyed, and realized while here on earth.

And so, beloved, I ask myself and my people what do we understand by this word "resurrection"? To me it presents the most blessed truths, for it tells that even in the life here upon earth, with the mortal frame that realizes the action of death more and more every day, there is to be known, and there is to be enjoyed, a life that is described as the resurrection life, the life that has some-

thing in it that never can be touched, a life that elevates a man altogether above the pains and distresses of this perishing prolongation of what we call existence here upon earth.

What is it? Surely most of us know it well in theory. I would to God we knew it in fact. It is just this, that when the Gospel of the Lord God Almighty was presented to the sons of men, it was not sufficient for the heart of the Father that He should be willing for His Son to die the death of a felon and malefactor on the cross in order to make atonement for the creation, but that beyond that and far above it was the blessed resolve that He would bring men to Himself. I do not wonder at the thought of those who scorn the idea of a hard, cruel God, exacting the very payment that was demanded for the sinner, and then leaving the sinner with his sins all cancelled, to get on as best he may. That is not the Gospel, though, thank God, it is in it. The Gospel is the love of God that longs to have the creature right up to Himself, won for Him through all eternity, and the Gospel that our Christ has brought to us is this, that, "because I live, ye shall live also," and the very life that the Son of God had, as perfected man, the moment He rose from the dead by the power of the Father, that life, the very instant that you believe with your whole soul into Christ, is transmitted to you, and unites you to Him. And you, my brethren, if there be any in this church who have never yet known the throbbing power of that spirit-life which God gives, through

His dear Son, to you I preach, that at this moment, if your whole soul is realizing the emptiness and vanity of this life, the perishing thought of the vapour-existence that mocks you as you seek to find out its meaning and reality, that, instead of that life, you may take into your soul, by substitution, through faith, the very Son of God Himself, so that the words become true that follow my text, "Christ is our life."

That is the Gospel, and the moment that we accept it we are "risen with Christ," by the faith of the operation of God. For when baptism takes place in its great spiritual reality, not the mere external form, of course, alone, but in the reality that is symbolized or figured by the form, when that blessed baptism takes place upon the soul, the man enters into the death of Christ and is buried with Him for sin, in order that—"like as the Son was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father"—we, too, might be raised with Christ from the death of sin into the life of righteousness, the life of holiness, the life of communion, the life of safety, the life of power, which Jesus Christ Himself now has, away up there at the right hand of God. Will you take it, my brother? And, as you take it, my brethren, the Christ of God becomes your very life, and you are united to Him, and, can He die? "Death hath no more dominion over Him." Can He know corruption? Now no more to see corruption. Can He know sorrow, and pain, and suffering? He is passed into the very presence

of God, where there are no more tears, no more sorrows, no more sighing, no more pain; and though the poor body, the outward man, must go through its doom—and God would be false if He allowed any to escape it—the human frame perishing goes to corruption, yet the soul, which is alive unto God this day in Christ Jesus, is called to know and to realize more and more, and, step by step, to enter into the fulness of the blessing of the life that God's dear Son enjoys.

Brethren, what is it to know Christ as my life? Would to God I had the power to tell you. Shall I put forward a few thoughts that have occurred to me, and leave them to you to follow out afterwards? To have Christ for my life is to have Him, first, as the very source and foundation from which all true life must flow.

Secondly, to have Christ as my life is to have Him as the very essence and reality of my life from this moment.

Thirdly, to have Christ as my life is to know Him as the Sustainer, Keeper, and Empowerer of my life on every single point where difficulty or danger may arise.

Fourthly, to have Christ as my life is to have Him as the joy, the comfort, the very delight of my life, so that, day by day, He more and more satisfies the soul that feeds upon Him.

Fifthly, to have Christ for my life, is to have Him as the very pattern of life, so that, day by day, as I study the Christ, I become permeated with Him, and become more and more like Him.

Sixthly, it is to have Him as the sustaining power when flesh and heart fail, and the poor "mortal coil" has to give itself up to the activities of death, then to have Christ as one who lifts us from mortality to immortality: and then,

Seventhly, to have Him as the power of an endless life, to have Him all through eternity, as the very power of our life, to have Him living in us.

This, my brethren, is the Gospel of God. This, we are told, is what all of us may have, and here the one verse I must stay to read only, shall speak its power to our souls, from this same book of the Wisdom of Solomon, in the 15th verse of the 5th chapter. "But the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them." Oh, thank God, "the care of them is with the Most High, therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand, for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete armour, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies."

That is the Gospel of God, that is the offer that is made to us to-day, and what are you and I to do, beloved brethren? As I look at my motto text, and as you look at it, I hope, in your homes, from this day, may this thought present itself to each of us, have I eaten and drunk, slept, and

indulged the body? If so, let us resolve henceforth to use it with a view to the life that is eternal, use it for the glory and praise of God.

What is my life? Is my life, my opportunities, my talent of wealth, is it all being used for the glory of God, or for the flesh, the life that is a vapour? Am I living for a vapour lighter than mist, more perishing than a cloud, more intangible than a dream, more fickle than a tale, am I living for that? Oh, God! forgive me, when, away up there by God, which I may grasp this day and claim as my own, there is a life to be lived, a life that begins on earth and is ripened in glory, a life that makes me partaker of Christ, a life that bids me aspire, not as an eagle swooping down to her prey, but to mount up with wings as the eagle that rises to the sun until it can stare in the very face of God's own light. Will you have it? Will you live it? It surely is worth having. But let me tell you the contact is there as it were between the two parts of my text, side by side, but, remember, they are absolutely diverse, and yet they are to be conjoined in this way, that the life which is being lived in the flesh, which is lived by faith in the Son of God, obliterates, step by step, all that is bad and earthly, and substitutes for the life that now is, and is a vapour, the life that is hid for security, hid for fellowship, hid for enjoyment, hid for power, away up there with Christ in God; and the thought of the heart that is this day alive unto God through Jesus Christ should be this: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in

me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me ; ” and the one ambition of such a life should be this, that God through Christ may be all in all. This may God grant to my beloved flock more and more, till we meet in God’s glory, through Jesus Christ our perfect Saviour ! Amen.

1892.

SATISFIED.

Psalm iv. 6.—“Many say . . . who will show us any good?”

Jeremiah xxxi. 14.—“My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord.”

SATISFIED.

FROM the day that man first fell under the power of the devil, there has been one piercing cry going up to heaven from all the race, "Who will show us any good?" and many and diverse have been the answers to the enquiry.

It would be impossible to accuse mankind of having been lax or careless in their earnest search for what is good for themselves; for the heavens above and the earth beneath have been ransacked and questioned, at every point, by men looking out eagerly for that which they believe to be *the good*; and, in one sense, there is not a part of God's creation to-day, I suppose, that has not been questioned by the eager souls of mankind, "where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" And yet, "man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living."

In every age, in every clime, men have taken pains and troubled themselves much to seek for

what they believed to be *the good*, and they have laid an embargo upon every part of God's universe to try and discover what they believe to be the *summum bonum*—the good of goods—which their souls desired.

And very remarkably different have been the answers to the question. How often, brethren, has that vain shout been raised by some man who thought himself wiser than his fellows, "Eureka—I have found it"; and the world at large has run after him eargerly, thinking that by philosophy, or by scientific research, or by earnest power and zeal, the man has discovered that for which their souls are hungering.

And yet, how baffled, how sad, and troubled, and completely crushed back, have been all these yearnings on the part of mankind, when they have followed a fellow-creature in his vain attempt to discover *the good*, unless he has been taught to seek it in God.

Some, for instance—and of course I need hardly say these are the lowest of men, unworthy of the name of men at all—have said that good is to be found in the mere enjoyment of eating, and drinking, and the indulgence of the lowest, animal instincts, and have given themselves up therefore to the pursuit of what is known as "appetite." Have they found good? They have forgotten the irrevocable and unchangeable law of God, that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"; and "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption"; and I need hardly say to a

congregation such as this—I need hardly say to an intelligent body of human beings—that the man who gives himself to the search of good simply by the indulgence of the flesh, must bring about his own utter degradation and ruin, and, hereafter, his own final and absolute destruction; for he is lowering every faculty that God has bestowed, he is bringing himself down step by step—not, as men sometimes say, to the level of the beasts, but to an infinitely lower level, he is giving himself over worse even than the devils, to faculties and powers such as devils, so far as we know, never possessed. And, therefore, if a man says that he will seek good in enjoying the mere carnal lusts of the body—strange, that there should still be so many who think they are going to find good in these things—he must fall until he comes in the end to “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.” Is such a man ever satisfied, brethren? Satiated, in our Anglicised sense of the word, he may be (not in the sense of the Bible, when the word occurs as in our text), but never satisfied—never. We know it. No appetite of the flesh can ever satisfy the instincts of a being made for God, and, therefore, the man that gives himself to the things of the body will never find *the good* or by any possibility be satisfied.

Another body of men there are—thank God, somewhat removed from these miserable creatures—who tell us that good and true satisfaction are to be found in enjoying the pleasures of social life, and that man, being made a perishable

creature, should, in a proper sense, "eat and drink for to-morrow he dies," and take life in all its pleasures to the utmost. And how many votaries of fashion there are who think that, by enjoying "the seasons" as they are called in this city, men are going to find satisfaction and good. Now, my brethren, as honest, practical, capable people, I ask you to pass with me down Hyde Park in the season when that long string of carriages is gathered there. I have only done it two or three times in the 16 years I have been with you, but I solemnly aver (and you can trust your minister's word), and I challenge your judgment as I affirm, that never have I seen 1000 people, if they are there, look so abjectly miserable as the people that sit in their carriages, and are said to represent "high life," when they have been through part of a London season. Any man can see for himself that such people, instead of knowing satisfaction in the right sense of the word, are worse off than the slaves bound to the chariot wheels of a conqueror, who feel that they may be going to bondage or death. They look like, what I believe they are, the very impersonation of misery and distress.

— There is another class of people who tell us that satisfaction is to be found in gain. I may not stay to distinguish between the different classes of gain, from that low, mean, dissatisfied craving for money up to the very highest of all ambitions and desires ever found in the human intellect: from the mere miser who seeks money

for money's sake, right away up to the man who craves to discover the secrets of the stars; they are all seeking for gain, and they get it to some extent. But, after all, there is one point of similarity between all these men who give their lives to the acquirement of gain, and it is this:—that whether it be the richest of men, or whether it be the man who produces the most perfect poetry, or whether it be the man who produces the most splendid statues, or whether it be the man who attains to the highest of earthly ambitions for name and fame among his fellow-creatures, in fact whatever it is that a man seeks for, just so long as he seeks it without reference to God, each one confesses that there is something higher to be got; and, when criticism is passed, there is always this verdict, "it is not perfect, there is something higher." And what means this, my brethren, but that from all parts of the world, from the lowest of men to the highest—the cry is ascending before God, "Who will show us any good?" the real good, the good that shall last, the good that shall satisfy the soul of one who was made for his God.

And, while men are thus ambitious and craving for the highest and noblest, what see we? We see that as civilization and learning have advanced in these days by rapid strides—and there is a marvellous increase in the tendency on the part of men to produce things that shall please and comfort—luxuries, learning, literature, everything that could be said to satisfy the intellect, are being produced at an abnormal speed

—yet, do they satisfy? What see we, brethren? We see marked intellectual as well as scientific and social advance; but on the whole we just find this, go where you will, that while we are being told by politicians that there is to-day* less chance of war than there has been for years—alas! their forecasts are often falsified and interrupted—all the time there has never been, I suppose, in the history of man such a widespread sense of distress, discomfort, and bitterness as now exists, class against class, rank against rank, country against country; there is, as there never has been before, I believe, an almost universal sense of bitterness, dislike, and dissatisfaction.

And what means this? While all things are yearning upwards towards perfection, and while supply is always the child of demand, and the demand that has produced this extraordinary advance in the luxury, literature, and civilization of the day must have been a real and actual fact, yet do all these things result in satisfaction? *They* cannot find the good; on the contrary, the cry is going up everywhere that testifies to this. Man can never be satisfied with the things of earth, man can never find *the good* in the things that he produces: he may crave, and yearn, and seek always for perfection, but never can he live by his own development or power.

And now, what has been the consequence of this phenomenal advance in so many quarters and, at the same time, of this distress and difficulty?

What has been the outcome of it all but this,

* January 1st, 1892.

that to-day we see, side by side with this extraordinary advance in the scientific and learned production of man's brain, the strangest events ever known. I mean such as these :—spiritualism, esoteric Buddhism, socialism, and at last we come even to nihilism. These are the outcome of the dissatisfaction provoked necessarily by the efforts of clever men to find satisfaction and goodness in the things of earth, and failing, as such men ever must, there comes a revulsion of feeling which leads to a yearning towards *the unseen* in spiritualism, towards *the abstract* in esoteric Buddhism, towards *equality* in socialism, towards *extinction* in nihilism; and it ends in a blank, abject spirit of despair which has produced suicides at a rate never known before (even relatively in proportion to the increase of population), till men are being swept off the face of the earth in numbers (and will be in multitudes if war should eventuate) simply from the fact that the craving after goodness never can be satisfied while they are seeking it in manhood.

“Where then is wisdom to be found, and where is the place of understanding?” “Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living.” But meantime, while men are craving hopelessly and helplessly for that to which they cannot attain, there stands side by side with every soul that ever has heard the Gospel of God, One Who is yearning to give, Who knows no pleasure, I believe, but in giving, Who never can possibly be satisfied except as He gives—the

Great High God, the God Who made us, the God Who claims us, the God Who has bought us, the God Who owns us, the God Who loves us with an everlasting love, He it is Who, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is standing before the souls of men and saying, "I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness," and, "My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord."

David himself, when he wrote the 4th Psalm, seems to have understood the deep meaning of this word, for he says, "many are saying, who will show us any good?"—the blank cry of despair goes up from human nature as long as it looks to itself for supply; but, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us"—upon me, specially. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart," *Thou* hast put it there, THOU. "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety"—and that is goodness; that is satisfaction; and the man of God may have it at once.

And now, what I want to do, my brethren, is briefly to turn from the dark side, that leads but to despair, and, I believe, to inevitable and absolute destruction for mankind, in order to look at this bright, blessed, beautiful vision which God gives first to His prophet Jeremiah concerning His power to satisfy, and then has given to us in these days, not in vision, but in reality, if we will accept it in the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is very blessed to turn from darkness to light,

very blessed to find, after the dark fogs of London which we have lately experienced, the bright sunshine of this morning ; and it is very beautiful to turn to-day from the dark despair of human nature to this bright, beautiful vision and reality of God's goodness and satisfying power. How shall I do my subject justice? I have quailed from it, I have dreaded it, and yet longed for it. I tell you solemnly, brethren, that these motto sermons cost me more than the sermons of all the year put together, in one sense ; it seems so solemn, so ineffably solemn, to tell my people, both those who are saved and those who are unsaved, something that shall speak to them direct from God, and make them know the blessings and the joys of my Saviour, which He offers so freely and fully to all. How shall I do justice to this wonderful word, " My people shall be satisfied with My goodness " ? Satisfied—" O Naphtali, satisfied with favour and full with the blessing of the Lord." Why should not my people be Naphtali to-day, and henceforth, and for evermore ?

What mean we, brethren, when we say " satisfied " ? It is a remarkable fact that, the more simple the idea of a word, the more difficult it is to define it accurately ; so much so that when you ask even a philosopher or a logician his explanation of a word in our own English tongue which we all use and understand, he appears aghast and staggered, and he will say, " Satisfied ? why it means—satisfied." Yes, brethren, it is

just that, it means SATISFIED ; do not make it less or more *to-day*.)

I stood by the bedside of one of my congregation a day or two ago, and I showed her the motto text as she lay there in the hospital, where she has gone for a very serious operation, and, as I showed her the text, she said, "Oh, thank God, that is just for me." "Satisfied," she said, "just wanting nothing more"; and I said, "Thank you, you have given me the definition I needed : just wanting nothing more." : *Just wanting nothing more*. I had got my text months ago, but I had no definition, and I thankfully took it as a message from God, that if we are satisfied we just want nothing more.

And if this, my brethren, be possible, is it not right, is it not necessary, that every soul in this church should yearn for this blessing, and that everyone who looks upon my motto text should say, "Oh, my God, how may this be obtained?" Well, brethren, the Lord is a generous giver, where He gives He gives abundantly; and you and I have but to take what the Lord gives.

Then let us remember that while the Psalmist is saying, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness," as we heard this morning in the Psalms, and while Jeremiah had but a dream or vision of it, there is power in God that will meet the needs of *to-day*; and the cry that is going up is for the moment, I believe.

It is a very remarkable sign of the times that so few seem to be able to look beyond the present

—so many are not able to look out into the future, into the unknown eternity, and what is heard on all sides is, “Give us something that meets the needs of to-day, give us something that shall benefit humanity now.” That is what we mean by all the social movements we are making to-day. Men want the present to be satisfied. Do you suppose that God, Who made us and loves us, is not able to meet the present as well as the future? Oh, brethren, let us be real; and while we find that this will suit every sphere of our existence, every faculty of our being, let us thank God that it is for the present as well as the future, and let us carry the meaning a little further, and say that it will involve this effect, no want, no bitterness, no wearying in the fires, no distress—there may be pain, there may be suffering (we must be careful what we say), there may be trial, trouble, death even (unless the Lord come), but there shall be no sense of dissatisfaction, no sense of unsatisfaction, when the Lord comes to visit His people and fulfil this blessed promise.

Now, can it be in the present life?

First, my brethren, who are His people? And it is this that the prophet Jeremiah so beautifully evolves. He tells this people Israel, whom he loved, that the first thing they had to learn was this, that they had neglected, and forgotten, and turned away from, the God Who had bought them, and therefore they had come to trouble; and that the man can never, never be satisfied—that is the great thought of Jeremiah, I believe—no

matter how great he may be, so long as he is self-centred or looking for blessing from anything less than the Great High God himself. For while men strive to find satisfaction, they strive in vain, as waves that beat on a rocky shore; and the heart of man must ever, as Augustine said, be restless until it rest in God.

Then, says the prophet, you must learn that sin is sin in the sight of God, and that sin, being sin, is exceeding sinful, but that God, as he says, has loved them with an everlasting love; with loving kindness and tender mercies has He drawn them, step by step, from the position of an outcast, into personal union with Himself; and that, when He has done this for them, He will give them fulness of provision in His own mighty way, until at last, in the 23rd verse, He will bring them back to such a place that they shall be able to say that the Lord dwelleth in mighty power, and that He is the "habitation of justice," and the "mountain of holiness."

And I need hardly say that, living in the Gospel dispensation, as we do, we say that sin is sin, and separates us from God, that God loves us with an everlasting love, that in Christ Jesus He has drawn us towards Himself, and that, in order to find rest for the soul, it is absolutely necessary that every man should come into that habitation, that sure dwelling-place, that beautiful resting-place, which God has provided in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. The moment a man gets there he is in a place of

safety, which is to be described as the “habitation of justice,” and the “mountain of holiness.” Then such people become the people of the Lord—“my people”—and the moment they become His people, God undertakes to satisfy them fully with His goodness if they will accept it.

Now, my brethren, mark the precise order in which God acts in the matter; because it is here that people, intelligent, and thoughtful, and saved of God—as I hope most, if not all, in this Church are—are at a loss with regard to the satisfying purposes of God.

Man is made up of three different departments or spheres of being—his spirit, his soul, and his body. God invariably brings them forward in that order. But if you look to human nature as it is since the fall of our father Adam, you find man invariably begins by seeking satisfaction in the body. Take a child, it craves for nothing but the pleasure of eating, drinking, and sleeping, enjoying the bodily pleasures. Take a savage, he knows nothing but bodily pleasures and appetites. Take a sinner, a wilful sinner I mean, he seeks for satisfaction nowhere but in the body: and let a man rise from this child life upward, step by step, to the highest point of intellect, you will find that he is limited by what we should call the soul’s experience; the mind, the heart, the will, are all involved in the action of the man who seeks satisfaction in this direction, but he never—however vast his attainments—can hope to rise to the spirit sphere, for the “natural man ($\psi\acute{\upsilon}\chi\upsilon\kappa\omicron\varsigma$)

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

But you will observe that God invariably acts from the other extreme. Man seeks to rise through the body to the soul; and then, if there be a spirit life hereafter, he hopes to attain it in Eternity. God commences in Time with the spirit, and will descend, step by step, if man will obey His will, to the body. And now see how God works out this opposite display of His goodness.

Into the spirit department of man—which is totally distinct from the soul, remember, however brilliant the soul may be—into the spirit department, where man has no inhabitant whatever, as Jude tells us, v. 19, *ψυχικοί πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες*, God introduces His Holy Spirit—the Spirit life of the Son of God. Christ is brought in by the Spirit of God, and, in the spirit, the man is now filled with the Spirit of God: the Holy Ghost has taken possession, and you will find that man is absolutely satisfied. Why? Because the spirit is a peculiar department that either is given over to the devil or to God, and the moment it is given to God by the Holy Ghost power, it is filled; and, being filled, there is "nothing more wanting." "Just wanting nothing more"; therefore satisfied; therefore altogether one with God the Spirit.

Now, from the spirit, God the Holy Ghost

proceeds to work out towards the soul. And here the man has choice by reason of his will, and, if a man be willing—he has his choice—the man gives over his soul. He gives over his heart, that is, his emotions ; and his brain, that is his mind or head, and God the Holy Ghost takes possession for Christ of the soul of the man. But how far can the Holy Ghost keep that soul? Remember, it is quite different from the spirit; it is not a matter of yielding once and for ever, as it is in the spirit, because I find many people whose souls—that is the mind, the heart, and the will—are constantly fretting, and grumbling, and they have no satisfaction. What means it, brethren? It means this—that in the soul department, involving these three at least, if not more, you must, moment by moment, be willing; and it is as you, moment by moment, give yourself over to the Lord, that you find the soul is, as it were, absorbed with God. Now, let a soul be absorbed with God for one moment while I am speaking; that moment the soul is satisfied, and it wants nothing more. Get away to the world and begin to cast up your books; your books are wrong, dissatisfaction commences at once. Get away to the home, to the troubles of the family, and you begin to murmur at once, there is no satisfaction; but if the soul were yielded to God, if the mind and heart were yielded to God every moment, so that they never were outside God's will, His purpose, His love, there is perfect satisfaction; my will God's will,

my heart God's heart, my mind set upon God's purposes, I know nothing wanting then, I have no fret and no bitterness, I am satisfied with the Lord, and He gives me peace, and life presents no bitterness or obstacle.

But there is one step further, brethren, and it is the body. Now, mark the difference. Let us understand the gospel—people do so malign our God. The poor body can never be satisfied here upon earth—never, never. Please to understand this. It can be brought into subjection; it can be made to act like a machine in obedience to the will, to the mind, to the purposes, and to the love of God, but it never can be satisfied, because God has ordained that the body, so long as we remain in this mortal flesh, shall be absolutely subject to corruption. “Flesh and blood *cannot* inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” Therefore, the poor body must always be wanting something, and to want something is to be unsatisfied; therefore my body can never be satisfied. I may satiate it by overfilling it, but that brings nothing but dissatisfaction. The body waits for the adoption—to wit, its redemption. “In this *tabernacle* we groan being burdened,” waiting for “our *house* which is from heaven.” And, blessed be God! it is not, my brethren, a token of dissatisfaction to say, “Oh, sir, I am in such sore pain, I am weighed down with agony.” It is a sin to murmur, it is a sin to put your will against God's purposes, your judgment against

God's judgment, but it is *not* a sin to groan being burdened in the flesh when trial comes upon that which we call our human nature. But, blessed be God, there is a good day coming: a day of which we read in Philippians iii. 21, when, if "our conversation is in heaven," the Lord shall descend from heaven, and "shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory."

Thus, brethren, I begin to see a little of the meaning of my text, and of the Psalm we have read, "I shall be satisfied when I wake up after His likeness," for "we shall be like Him" when we "see Him as He is."

One last word, and it is this: How will He satisfy? He will satisfy the spirit by filling it with His Spirit; He will satisfy the soul when it is yielded to Him; He cannot satisfy the body until the adoption, which is its redemption and its glorification; but He can always satisfy our higher instincts. Let us then leave the body, let us be content to suffer in the flesh, only let us see that the spirit and the soul are satisfied—"satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord."

"My goodness." O beloved, I may not tarry to put before you what I had thought of, the many texts that speak of the means, the way in which God will satisfy us—"Satisfied with the fatness of His house," "Satisfied with the goodness of His house." "Satisfied with bread from heaven." "Satisfied with the river of His pleasures." "Satisfied with honey out of the

stony rock." Satisfied with all His love and mercy. Surely you and I have much to be thankful for if we can take these things to our spirit and our soul, and leave the body to get its glorification hereafter.

Are we willing to-day? Oh, my brethren, may I appropriate God's words, and venture to take them to myself—I trust I am justified. My people—they are God's people, I hope—but, oh, I want my people to be satisfied, I want to see my people living the life that glorifies God. It will tell upon the world: it will attract the philosopher, it will win the scientist, it will bring out the nihilist, it will stop the socialist, it will change the nations, if two thousand people go out of this church to-day, who, realizing in their own experience the fulness of God's blessing, are able to say, I have proved that the Lord is good; and if you can say, like one dear old lady connected with this congregation when I visited her on her dying bed, "Why, sir! I have been very very rich"—she was a lady, as I knew, who had no great income really—and I stared, and for a moment could not think what she meant. "What is it?" I said. "Why, sir," she said, "my Father has never allowed me to go out without two footmen walking behind me, never." I said, "Indeed, will you tell me their names?" "Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life—and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

And if all this is true, there is One more to be

satisfied, only One, when you and I and all the Church of God in every land are gathered in, and the last stone has been laid as the top-stone of the church, with shoutings of " Grace, grace unto it," and every soul in that church is amply satisfied in the Lord, there will be One who, presenting the church, a perfect church, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," to the Father, "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Amen.

1893.

STILL UPWARD.

Ezekiel xli. 7.—“Still upward, . . still upward, . . still upward.”

Ezekiel xliii. 12.—“The whole limit . . . most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.”

STILL UPWARD.

IT will help us somewhat to the understanding of these words, if we read carefully the whole of the verses from which they are taken.

“And *there was* an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers : for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house : therefore the breadth of the house *was still* upward, and so increased *from* the lowest *chamber* to the highest by the midst.”

“This is the law of the house ; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about *shall be* most holy. Behold this is the law of the house.”

That I am justified in conjoining these words will be perfectly clear to everyone who remembers that the whole passage from the commencement of the 40th chapter, to the close of the 48th, is one continuous vision, and that, throughout, the terms “Mountain” and “House” are used in one particular sense, having the same meaning or force, viz., in the “position” and “building” of the temple of God.

And while, my brethren, I am dwelling upon this wonderful vision, I need hardly say that in the spiritual application thereof to *ourselves*, I shall invite you to remember ceaselessly this striking and solemn declaration of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) And in the 6th chapter of the same Epistle he says, "What! know ye not that your body"—young men and women for God's sake remember this—"know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.)

That there is deep "mystery" connected with this vision of Ezekiel, and even with the words of my Motto Text, I cannot attempt to deny, but I have somewhat specially chosen these words, this year, that I may, if possible, provoke my hearers to a more diligent study of this remarkable passage as a whole.

The word "mystery" is used in a two-fold sense: first, in the ordinary way in which we use it, meaning that there are things placed before us which are too deep and too wonderful for us to fathom at all; and secondly, in the *Gospel* sense, meaning that there are things "kept secret since

the world began," but which God in his infinite mercy now has made manifest and revealed to us in and through Christ Jesus our Lord, "for the obedience of faith." (Romans xvi. 25, 26.)

There are things in this vision, "secret things which belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. xxix. 29), which you and I can never hope to understand in the present dispensation, but which will one day be opened to us, "when the mystery of God shall be finished" (Rev. x. 7.)—and there are things which any spiritual man may judge or discern (1 Cor. ii. 15), because they are revealed to him by the Spirit of God.

It is to *these* things that I desire now to turn your attention, as supplying us with ample food for meditation and study, not only during this one sermon, but throughout the whole year, when we look upon our Motto Text. And as we take up these words and endeavour to understand them in their spiritual sense, let me ask you to remember at the very outset, that the whole passage is a "vision." It was in the visions of God that the prophet saw this new temple.

Now, a vision is not the same as an ordinary prophecy, in which, though the terms may be hard, the truth is plainly and straightforwardly conveyed, so that if once you fathom the thing, you have immediately grasped the intention of the speaker; whereas, in a "vision," there is confessedly an *ideal representation*,—as, for instance, in the case of Daniel's image and Daniel's beasts—so that, when you gaze upon the

vision called up before your eyes, you are conscious that it is in a parabolic form of imagery that you are intended to understand some deep spiritual truth, and you may not be capable, for want of spiritual understanding, of grappling with the truth the Spirit would teach you.

This was the special difference between Moses and other prophets, that God spake to him "not in a vision, nor in a dream," but "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches" (Num. xii. 6, 8.).

It therefore needs ever the Spirit of God to understand the visions of God, and we must ask that that Spirit may be amongst us this morning, to enable us to grasp the deep, spiritual meaning of those visions which are before us for our instruction.

Now, when we ask ourselves, with regard to this vision as a whole, what is to be the method or plan of exposition of what is confessedly a most difficult passage, I need hardly say to the student of God's word that there are many schools of thought concerning it, and that, of course, all will depend upon the line or system of explanation adopted.

Let me briefly notice the chief systems of interpretation:—

(1). Some think it referred entirely to the past, and that in the whole of this so-called vision of the temple, Ezekiel was simply narrating, for the benefit of the captives in

Babylon, what he himself had seen in his childhood, when dwelling at Jerusalem,—so that these chapters contain an exact picture of the Temple, *as it was*, at the time the Jews were carried away captive to Babylon. The prophet is, therefore, supposed to have given this picture that the remembrance of what had existed might be preserved among the Jews.

To my own mind, this is an absolutely futile exposition, with the exception of the one thought that there had been a temple in some degree resembling the one in the vision, for some of the measurements exactly correspond in the temples of Solomon and Ezekiel, and therefore there would be a measure of instruction for the captives in the fact that Ezekiel's vision was in the form of a temple. Beyond this I have seen no possible evidence of its having been the exact temple which existed at Jerusalem, for there are physical and geographical improbabilities in the case.

(2). Others hold that the vision was an ideal picture from the Lord of what the Jews were intended to build when they returned from captivity—but never did build. The temple of Ezekiel was to be the model or type by which they should work. And in this view we can hardly doubt that there is some measure of truth.

This vision must without question have encouraged the Jews in the days of Zerubbabel to arise and build the temple again at Jerusalem, of which second temple God was pleased to say, by

the Holy Ghost, "that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former" (Haggai ii. 9), and that in this new house God would give peace, perfect peace.

But whether they sought or not to copy this picture—it is quite clear that they could not fulfil the whole vision, for there are geographical and other difficulties which would make it absolutely impossible (while the land retained its present conditions) that all the details of this vision should be literally carried out.

(3.) Others maintain that it is *simply and only* a spiritual vision—conveying God's *spiritual* purposes for His Church in all ages and in all countries:—that the Church being the "temple" (Ephes. ii. 21, 22) or "House of God" (1 Tim. iii. 15) is to grow up on this model or pattern to its full and final perfection—upward, upward to the very throne of God Himself in Heaven, and then from it shall go forth that river of the water of life (Ez. xlvii.) which shall make everything to live whithersoever it cometh, and that then the land shall be divided among God's people for an inheritance.

It is here, of course, that the double sense of the word "mystery" meets us. And if this view be correct (as it most unquestionably is *in part*), then there are some things in the vision altogether too hard for us, and which only the future day can *possibly* explain (things, such as the thickness of the walls, and the exact figures of measurement, &c.), while there are other "mysteries" in

the blessed Gospel sense of the word; that is—truths which in Christ Jesus are made to shine with glorious light, though unintelligible till He had come.

(4.) Again, there is another school of thought which holds that this vision has never been fulfilled in any sense, and that it must be classed in what is known as “unfulfilled prophecy,” and that it will yet receive its strict and literal fulfilment when Israel is restored to his own land “in the latter days,” and will then erect a temple on the very lines of the vision of Ezekiel, in which there will be sacrifices and offerings, and in that way the nation will be gradually prepared for the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Messiah.

But in this view again we are met by physical difficulties; (i) in regard to the term “a very high mountain” (Ez. xl. 2), whereas Mount Zion is a very low hill (though I think God could remedy that!); (ii) in regard to the divisions of the land, of which the twelve tribes are to have exact and equal parts (Ez. xl. 5) (though God could arrange that difficulty also!); and (iii) with regard to certain details of the temple buildings, especially the size.

I am content to leave all this to the future for my gracious Master to explain, but it seems to me that such a vision as this must have a direct historical fulfilment, and that though the terms employed may be ideal (as in all visions they are), they must be exactly carried out.

It is often said that "no parable runs on all fours," and that thought or proverb is applied to God's holy visions, simply because we in our ignorance cannot fathom their meaning.

I protest most strongly against such a view, and holding that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), I wait patiently for the Lord to explain His own meaning, while for the present I would gather from His visions all instruction that I may. I firmly believe that everything God has deigned to say as prophecy will be hereafter exactly fulfilled, wherever He has given us a strict literal sense, but in a vision, as I have already said, we must never forget we have ideal representation, not direct literal prophecy by words; hence when we come to consider the vision of Ezekiel, we must remember constantly that, whatever of the literal it may contain, the real inner meaning must be sought in the spirit, and not in the letter.

And while I believe that the first of the four theories must be absolutely rejected, except that it has in it this much of truth, that the lines of Ezekiel's temple are taken from Solomon's, I believe that in each of the three others there is much of truth, viz.:—that the vision was to call up before the minds of the Israelites the purpose and thought of building the temple on their return

from Babylon ; that it is a spiritual vision of the Church of God in all ages ; and that it is also a picture of what will be done by Israel in the latter days when they return once again to their own land.

And taking now the third view as of the most importance to us, I simply intend to call your attention this morning to the spiritual aspect of this wonderful passage, in which I see a vision of the Church of the living God, under the type of the temple, city, and House of God.

And this will bring us to consider the real spiritual meaning and significance of the chief terms used in this vision. For instance, we read in Ez. xl. 2 of "the very high mountain," which is also mentioned in my text (xliii. 12) as the place upon which the House is to be built, and "the whole top," or "limit" of which is to be "most holy." This is clearly in a spiritual sense (as I need hardly recall to my hearers), the same as that of Rev. xxi. 10, to which the Apostle was "carried away in the Spirit," and when he saw just what Ezekiel saw, namely—the frame of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God."

In a moment our thoughts recur to such texts as :—"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills" (Is. ii. 2). "The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness" (Jer. xxxi. 23). "The

mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (Ps. lxxii. 3, 16). "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." "Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following" (Ps. xlviii. 1, 2, 11, 12, 13).

In some mysterious way the prophet seems to say that the Lord will turn the lowly hill of Zion into "a very high mountain," and we realize that what we are called to think of is that marvellous spiritual position of favour, prosperity, and glory, "far above all principality and power," to which God has uplifted His Church in Christ Jesus, when He lifted Him from the cross to His own right hand. "Beautiful for situation" indeed is the city of our God!

And so the thought of my Motto Text is at once to call you to the mountain—upward, upward, and there at the right hand of God in heavenly places, to see the position God means the believer to occupy, even the very high

mountain of His own perfected glory. This I believe to be "the mountain."

The "city" which the prophet saw is, of course, "the Lamb's wife" (or the whole number of the Lord's elect), and so practically the same in extent and character as the "temple" or "house," only that the city seems to represent the work of grace in its completion, while the house and the temple are applied to the Church in its preparation.

Hence Ezekiel saw only the frame of a "city," or a building like a city in its frame and construction, and this frame of the city includes the temple or "house" (Ezek. xl. 5), and is itself the very building of the temple, and as the prophet looked on this city, which was the new Jerusalem that his soul so longed for, he saw that the city was, as it were, one great building—many habitations, it is true, but *one* building, and therefore a house for all, yet each having his own position and habitation of God. And this "house" or temple on the top of the mountain is, without doubt, that spiritual house the Church, which appears so often in the New Testament, wherein the glory of the Lord is to be seen, where the Lord God will have His abode, in the midst of His people, and will "tabernacle," or abide (as the word is) among them for ever; and of which the apostle says: "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6), while St. Peter says; "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritua

house" (1 Pet. iii. 6). And thus the City, the House, and the Temple are one, and are placed on the top of the Mountain.

Of this House (away on the very high mountain of God, far above, out of sight of the ordinary earthlings below), the prophet speaks in very wonderful terms; giving us the exact but mysterious description of things which only God could know, and which no human mind can really fathom. It must suffice for us humbly to gather what we may from the remarkable details which the prophet was inspired to convey. And while purposely avoiding any attempt to define those measurements which have puzzled so many students of prophecy, I think we may safely notice some things about the description which cannot fail to be profitable to our souls.

(1.) That the numbers used are those which generally *symbolize perfection*.

(2.) That the details given with such exactness concern far more the comfort, the blessing, the spirituality, and the power of the man who inhabits the temple in God's presence than the revelation of the Godhead; far less is said about the Divine side than the human; and why is this? Because the question of sin being settled, God has to deal with the holiness of His people, and in this new temple He is engaged in setting forth the possibilities of the Priests and Levites who inhabit it.

(3.) That there is no distinction between the outer and inner courts, etc., of this temple (as in

Solomon's): to show that the *whole* limit of the house was to be "*most holy*," though there was, of course, the most central spot where God would actually *reside* (Ez. xli. 4), and no detail is considered unimportant, for God expects the very doors, the very posts of the doors, the very floor, and every secret part of the temple, to be completely conformed to His mind and purpose, and in such a way that there can be no question among men but that all is of God.

(4.) That there is no mention of the Ark, or of a High-Priest in this temple, for there is no need of the mercy-seat, or of the relation of the law of God in that embodied form in which it was placed in the Ark. There is no need of the High-Priest after the form in which he appeared in the temple at Jerusalem, because sin having been dealt with, and done with, and put away for ever, "the glory of the Lord" can fill the *whole* of the house, and there is no need of a special means of access to God's presence. "Jehovah Shammah" (the Lord is there) applies to every part of the place.

And then, when I turn from the general features of the subject to consider the particular part of our text, how striking are these words: "Still upward—still upward—still upward," when we remember they were spoken more especially concerning the side chambers of the temple. This is the only place in which this expression is used, and there is a threefold iteration. These side-chambers were the usual "storehouses for the furniture and property of the temple" (1 Kings

vii. 51, Speaker's Commentary) ; and, if this be so, it is very remarkable that so exact a description is given of them, and that of them in particular we should read of their mounting ever upward "from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst." They were in three stories, one over the other, and the general idea conveyed by the passage is that (1) the three stories together were the same height as the whole temple (each of them being six cubits high ; with the beams added to these six, it would make the exact height, 20 cubits) ; (2) that every story was to be fitted for God's service ; and (3) that the *main law* of even these subsidiary buildings was "still upward," by a winding stair that passed from one story to another ; and, unlike ordinary buildings of men, these side-chambers became larger and wider as you ascended : "The breadth of the house was upward, and so increased." Whether from the walls being narrowed as they rose, and thus leaving a wider space for each storey within, or from the building being widened by props or stays standing outwards and supporting a wider building on each higher floor, but, at all events, this is the remarkable fact, that on *each* story, as you went "still upward," you would find more and more of the precious treasures of God, exactly as the river in Ez. xlvii. which at first was so shallow as not to be above the ancles, and afterwards became a river to swim in.

It is ever thus with the treasures of the Lord's temple : as a man rises "still upward—still upward—still upward," he finds the precious

things of God increasing for his use, and he has command of still more and still more, and still more.

Oh ! brethren, it is a wonderful fact, surely, that even in the smaller portions, even as it were, in the outside department of God's holy place, the poorest, the vilest, the most unworthy members of God's house, anyone in this Church, in fact, who may say : " I am not fit to gather up the crumbs from under Thy table, I am only fit to be a lean-to in the house of my God," may, by His infinite mercy and love, rise " upward, and upward, and upward " through the winding stairs to the uppermost story ; and every step he takes he will find the treasures of God provided and stored up abundantly for him.

This is the glorious revelation of our Motto Text—"still upward" towards the highest point, and as we rise there is ever more.

Far above, out of sight, there is the habitation of God ; but have you never stood (I have oftentimes), in a valley, and looked upwards with a longing to reach the highest tops hidden by mists and clouds, above our reach and above our contemplation ? So here, we begin to wonder what there can be at the highest point. When it has pleased God even here below to reveal such treasures, what can there be above ?

And thus we are told, for our own comfort, in the second part of my Motto Text—comfort I hope for my own soul, and also for the souls of my people—that there is but one law for the

whole of the house, which is practically summed up in these words: "Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house." Ah, brethren, upon the place where the house is built, upon the building itself, upon the altar, upon the priests, upon the sacrifices they offer, upon the garments they wear, aye, and upon the things they eat, we are told in chap. xliii., 13, 14, is written this one most solemn law—*most holy*.

There is no other law in God's house but this, there is no other permission for God's people but this, no other idea prevails in God's house but this: "The whole limit . . . most holy."

And God has laid down this law, and how dare we do otherwise than obey: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God defile,"—(as the word should be translated, 1 Cor. iii. 17).

Yes, my brother, you take a piece of God's house, and use it for yourself, and from that moment God will defile you. And that is why there are so few bright Christians on earth. That is why they seem to be tending downwards, and as they tend downwards the chambers narrow and narrow, for the *walls* are less.

While as you rise upwards you find the expansiveness of God's wonderful Gospel more and more manifested to your soul, but you must have written over every single faculty of your being, over every part of your existence "most holy. This is the law of the house."

And when all this "most holy" law is established, there shall be seen "the glory of the Lord" coming to the house.

Do you remember, you who have studied this beautiful book of Ezekiel, that when the prophet was taken in his earlier visions (chapters viii.—ix.) to see the iniquity which prevailed at Jerusalem, before the captivity was actually accomplished, he saw (oh, it was an awful vision to see!) the glory of the Lord, first in the house, then it stood over the threshold of the house, passing to the courts of the house, until at last it went away to the mountain on the east side of the city, and was lost to sight, and never seen again until long years afterwards, when God the Holy Ghost took the prophet to the top of the mountain, and there appeared a very different and most blessed sight.

How beautiful is the revelation and the order of the events in the opening of chap. xliii. In verse 2 the glory of the Lord is seen coming by "the way of the east"; verse 4, "into the house"; verse 5, "and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house"—and what is this but the *very real* manifestation of the presence, power, and beauty of the Lord given to His people for their comfort and holiness? He comes to inhabit His temple, and make it glorious by His presence.

The prophet was taken by the Spirit into the inner court, and he heard one speaking unto him "*out* of the house," he could not enter it then, because of the defilement on him as a sinner.

The glory of the Lord can only come when "the whole limit round about" the house is "most holy." It cannot come until the word holy, the one law, the only law, is written upon it.

The shaping of the house is God's plan, ever upward, extending and increasing in glory and in beauty, but the carrying out of the plan lies with man, and if man contracts the house, and makes a spire of the top—he may talk of the needle that points to heaven—but you know it is perilous to stand on a spire, and that is not God's way. By God's method the house increases in breadth, it is magnified in fulness, it is enriched in treasures, it gets more and more of enjoyment and blessings, if only every portion of it is "most holy." And then the glory of the Lord shall be seen filling every part of the house.

This is the vision, and my heart is full when I look on my people and think how God would have this vision fulfilled, how if it were fulfilled in its realities, we should live such a glorious life in anticipation of the glory to come.

And now in closing, let me apply very briefly this solemn vision to ourselves. Oh! brethren, there is one hard word and only one to be spoken this morning. It is this—that to enjoy the Lord's glory we *must* be not only admitted to the Lord's "Mountain of Holiness" (Jer. xxxi. 23, Obadiah 17, and see Jer. l. 4, 6, 7), but be constituted literally part of His temple or house: "Blessed are they that do His commandments,

that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, for without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. xxii, 14, 15).

If a man has not been delivered from the captivity of Babylon and Egypt and taken into the spiritual Zion—"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth" as well as of heaven, if a man has no part in these things, how can he rise "upward"?

And so I have to tell you this solemn truth, that the very first essential for the enjoyment of our text this year is that the "dead hear the voice of the Son of God." Though buried under the rocks at the very foot of the mountain, as it were in the grave of Lazarus, that voice can reach the sinner, and that man may hear the voice of the Son of God, and he that is dead may come forth "Alive unto God" for evermore.

And then, once alive, we are placed as members of this house, and that moment we become "lively stones" (1 Pet. ii. 5) to be part of God's temple, of which St. Paul says in Ephes. ii. 21, 22, "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Oh! look at your engagements, look at your bank books, look at your duties, look at your temptations, look at your pleasures, look at your

trials, look at each thing in the light of this text and say: "The whole limit . . . most holy," that is to say, my brethren, that the Christian's life (pray God that we may say it now), the Christian's life is limited by one single law, which is that he can never go outside of what is *most holy*, or he defiles the temple of God.

You may write it on your pleasure and God will bless it, you may write it on your money and God will double it, you may write it on your home and God will honour it, but it must be the law of the spiritual life, written everywhere—"most holy."

What a LAW to apply to every part of our life, and to have unceasingly before our eyes! Will each of you thus use the Motto Text, and apply it honestly to every doubtful question that arises? O God, what lives should I and my people lead! May He in His merciful power make it true. The priests "shall consecrate themselves" (Ezek. xliii. 26), and then, thank God, there shall be one progression, and one law of progression, because it is the law of the house, and it shall be—"still upward—still upward—still upward," "from the lowest to the highest to the midst," until we reach the very revelation of the perfect glory in the presence of God for evermore. Amen.

1894.

FULL SALVATION.

BY GRACE . . . SAVED.—*Eph. ii. 8.*

BY { Faith . . . live.—*Rom. i. 17.*
Love . . . serve.—*Gal. v. 13.*

BY { the Will . . . sanctified.—*Heb. x. 10.*
the Blood . . . enter.—*Heb. x. 19.*

FULL SALVATION.

IN offering you this morning what is known as our “Motto Text” for the year, I would request every member of the congregation to honour me by accepting as a New Year’s gift a copy of this Motto Card, and if possible, to place it in some prominent position in the home, so that it may be constantly before us as the spiritual reminder of the solemn truths which it affirms from God, and also as a constant token or sign of that intimate connection which ought to exist between minister and people. It is exceedingly difficult to establish congregational ties in any way in London, but I am pleased and thankful when this little token of our connection announces to all visitors that my people are not ashamed to say—not only this is the congregation to which I belong, but also—this is the thought which is placed before us this year, and, by God’s grace, I propose to live in accordance with it, and thereby glorify Him.

This Motto I offer to you as an exhibition of the whole course of the Christian life, to be, as it were, a brief summary of the personal experience of our spiritual existence which God in His gracious providence has called everyone of us to see and to know. Indeed, I consider it the divinely drawn, though, of course, very brief, portrait of the true Christian's career, from its inception to its completion, from the first moment when he accepted the good news that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," that it had pleased God in His great love to save the world by the sacrifice of His Son, down to the very last moment of his personal existence on earth, and even to that final entrance (which we all hope for) into everlasting glory "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of His testimony." (Rev. xii., II.)

I am perfectly conscious of the criticisms that may be passed by some upon the apparently fanciful selection of texts made. On such grounds as these I am aware that I may be fairly criticised: (1) That the texts are too numerous to form a Motto for the year; (2) That they are not the whole, but only portions of the verses; (3) That there are different words in the original for the preposition "by," and, therefore, that the minister is hardly justified in seeking to establish a connection which, according to the critics, is not found in God's Word.

But I would disarm all such opposition at the very outset by saying: (1) Though the number is

great for a Motto, it was essential that I should take this plan to establish the connection between the passages, in order to exhibit the whole career of the Christian, and not a part merely; (2) That though the selections are but portions from different texts, they, in every case, I am convinced, seize upon the special thought or truth which the writer wished to convey to his readers (and which I am specially desirous of enforcing), therefore I think that I am justified in taking them; and (3) It is the very fact of the difference in the original in regard to the preposition "by," and the doctrines which are taught by the different use of the prepositions, that constitutes the charm of the selection, and which will prove, as I hope, to my people, the great intention of God, the magnificent provision of God, and the wonderful power and beauty of God's Gospel as found in these passages.

I pass over the criticisms which I think will only be made by those who have not sufficiently studied the subject, and I proceed in the simplest and clearest manner that I can to deal with the texts one by one, and then to sum them all up together, as God may enable me, and to ask you—What think you of these things as in God's sight, and as in your own intentions with regard to the future?

And (i.) you will be struck by the fact that the first words "By Grace . . . saved" are placed as in a kind of canopy or arch over the whole; this has been done with the special

purpose of enforcing the truth that it is by Grace, and by Grace alone, that the gift of salvation becomes ours. This is the great foundation, and also the perfecting truth of the whole; upon the power of this *alone* could the other texts be possible; and into this all others must merge and be finally resolved. God was pleased, when He saw the ruined and helpless condition of man, to make the restoration complete and entire, not by means of man, but by His own love, providing a full and perfect provision for every possible need, and judicially (or as regards supply, offer, and acceptance before God), it may be said to the whole human race "By Grace ye are saved," or, as it is in the original, "By Grace ye have been saved."

And why do we say that it is the foundation and also the top stone of the arch of our perfect salvation? For this reason: St. Paul writes to Titus (ii. 11), "The Grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared" (R.V.), by which he undoubtedly means that, as God contemplated the ruin worked by sin, it came into His heart to exhibit actively (what He had determined from all eternity) His purposes of love, by bringing salvation unto men, who could bring none to themselves. Therefore God, in His infinite pity, without the assistance of any, purposed, planned, and carried out in its entirety the great work entitled the salvation of the human race; in its source, supply, and completion, the whole of our salvation is to be attributed to Grace, that is—unmerited favour on those who merit

nothing but "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" because of their guilt in the sight of their Maker, who puts Himself before men as the Provider of salvation for them in the freest, fullest way possible.

Hence it is that, in this particular instance out of the five, there is in the original no preposition, it is by grace, but far more than that, it is from grace, in grace, through grace, with grace, to grace, everything that our minds can possibly conceive as being involved in the indefinite expression "Grace." There is your salvation, says the Apostle, free and full in its *source*, as originating solely from God's perfect love; free and full in its *accomplishment*, as being carried out by the power of God absolutely; free and full in its *sufficiency*, because it meets every possible need that could exist; free and full in its *application*, as satisfying every longing of the human soul, if men will only accept it as God intends, by the teaching and the power of the Holy Ghost. And this salvation stands before our eyes absolutely and only as provided by God, and need I say that the medium through whom that "grace" is presented as "the power of God unto salvation" is the Person of His only and well-beloved Son Jesus Christ; and that while we read of "the grace of God as bringing salvation unto all men," it is through "the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST" that that salvation is supplied, so that the Apostle can only enhance His "glory" by speaking of it as "full of *grace* and truth."

And I rejoice to place at the very head as it were of the motto or chart of the way of salvation this blessed truth: "By Grace . . . saved." By the unmerited favour of God to a poor, lost sinner every human being must be saved if he is to be saved at all, and our text at the outset places before us this great thought, that we have in ourselves nothing whatsoever to do with the great work which we entitle the salvation of the soul—God must have all the credit, God must have all the glory, and so it is that in the broadest possible way the Apostle places before us this glorious truth: "By Grace are ye saved"—by which he seems to mean that, as far as God is concerned, the supply is complete, the offer is made of assistance to the whole human race, the position of acceptance is secured, and no one can be excluded from the intentions and provisions of Almighty God when they look at this simple, blessed word: "By Grace . . . saved," saved, saved for ever, saved in the fulness of the meaning of the word, saved as God alone can save, and saved to be all that God desires for the creature whom He calls into existence.

But then, while the salvation is complete, it stands to reason that there must be something on our part, that there must be human activity, in order that it may be appropriated and made our own.

Hence (ii.) we naturally turn to the next words of our Motto, "By Faith . . . live," but why so? Because if we ask—what is meant by

faith? the answer is simple and clear—it is the acceptance into the soul of whatever God may be pleased to offer, so that it becomes absolutely our own; in the fullest sense of the word—*our own*; and if God has made the provision of salvation by grace, we turn from that which is alone Divine and absolutely Divine to that in which human activities are discerned; of course, they are God-given properties or powers, but they must be put into exercise if man is to enjoy his great prerogative of free-will. God will never force men to take that which He offers to them, they must take of their own free-will; thence comes the demand for the exercise of the God-given prerogative in that simple little word “faith,” and the Apostle says “the just shall live by faith.” I would gladly have added two other kindred words on this subject had space permitted: “By faith ye stand” (2 Cor. i. 24), and again, “By faith we walk” (2 Cor. v. 7), and thus have made it “By Faith stand . . . live . . . walk,” as embracing the whole course of the Christian life, from its commencement to its close, and in every department or detail thereof; but it was not essential for me to do this for this reason:—You will remember that St. Paul is quoting the words “The just shall live by faith” from the book of Habakkuk ii. 14, and that he quotes them no less than three times in three different Epistles, in the one I have chosen, Rom. i. 17, and again in Gal. iii. 11, and in Heb. v. 38, for three special purposes or objects in which the whole course of

a Christian life is depicted ; it will suffice then to speak of this one great word, "By Faith . . . *live*," as embracing every part of our spiritual career in regard to God.

In Rom. i. 17, the Apostle is using the expression of the Prophet Habakkuk to show that man can never be brought to justification and life except by means of "Faith." In the Epistle to the Galatians he is clearly dealing with the subject of man's life if "justified by faith" (see Gal. iii. 2, 3), and he is quoting Habakkuk to show that man can only stand by means of faith, when he is alive ; while in Heb. x. 38 (as in 2 Cor. v. 7) he is evidently using the Prophet's expression as pointing forwards to eternal glory. In the first place it is the means of *obtaining* Life, in the second of *sustaining* Life, and in the third the means of *completing* Life in its perfection in heaven ; and as we follow the Apostle's argument, we see that he declares in these passages that "Faith" is the only means by which the blessing of God can be brought to man ; even when God has provided perfect salvation, the medium (as I have already said) by Whom that salvation is secured being the Lord Jesus Christ.

But when we turn from the Divine to the human, from the Divine source which is God's Love, the Divine supply which is Christ the Saviour, the Divine strength which is the Holy Ghost, to deal with human activity, we see at once how faith becomes essential. And why?

How is it possible for men who are "dead in trespasses and sins" to live before God? How can the true spiritual life be introduced? Simply, of course, by appreciating, apprehending, and appropriating as their own the provision which God has offered to them in Christ Jesus. But that provision *is* Christ Jesus—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10). Now faith takes what God gives—God gives Life, then "by Faith . . . *live*." So it comes to pass that the man who was dead passes out from this church, or from the place where he takes God's Holy Word, a different human being; he was dead one moment, he is alive the next—and with what life does he live? With the very Life of the Son of God, the Life which Christ offered for man. He has had the human life, but he has never had the Divine Life, and when he takes "the gift of God which is eternal life," he is made "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And how does he receive it? By "Faith." Now here the preposition is *ἐκ*, *i.e.*, out of, as being the condition or subjective ground of the blessing. This means that without faith (or personal appropriation), the blessing—however perfectly ready—is simply and inevitably of no avail to each soul. "Out of" or "by" faith the soul stretches out towards God, and appropriates what God bestows, and the man becomes the enjoyer of what God gives.

But Life received must display itself; and so

the Apostle, writing to the Galatians, says substantially: "If you once take Life from God by faith, you must exercise the Life"; "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" and so he says to the Corinthians: "By faith (ye) stand," and he is speaking to them, as also to the Galatians, of the tremendous difficulties and struggles of duty which the Christian man who is "alive unto God" has to pass through in this present world. And how can we stand in the battle of life? How can we stand in the hour of temptation? How can we stand in the stern necessities of duty? Simply and solely by the operation of faith: and thus again in 2 Cor. i. 24, "By faith ye stand," there is no preposition in the Greek: and why? Because the Apostle wants to bring us into the fulness of the position and into the enjoyment of that position by which we may stand by simply grasping Christ; temptation comes—Christ is mine; duty comes—Christ is mine; and all the way the life which I have received by faith I must learn to live by faith, so that I may stand in the strength of the living God, who gives to me the power of the Divine Life at every moment of my terrible need and necessity.

But then life has an object; and as the Christian looks on to the glory, and he thinks of the passage which has to be made through a naughty world of woe, up to the throne of glory beyond, he realizes that he has no power to make this terrible ascent through the darkness of this valley

to the heights of glory above, and so the Apostle says in Heb. x. 38, "The just shall live by faith," *i.e.*, live on, live through the temptations, the tribulations, and the trials that God appoints. And how? By Faith. No human strength can possibly prevail, and there is no hope for the Christian until by Faith he can rest in the Word of God, so that, even if "our earthly house of this tabernacle should be dissolved" through terrible trials in the flesh, Faith can claim the power of God to preserve us to life everlasting. Thus St. Paul says when speaking to the Corinthians (2 Cor. v. 7): "We walk by Faith," and there the preposition is *διὰ*, *i.e.*, through the operation of Faith we walk. And where do we walk to? "We walk by faith" "through the valley of the shadow of death," "we walk by faith" through the trials and tribulations of earth, because we look for the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and "by faith" we are carried on in the power of our God straight to the judgment seat of Christ, where we shall stand and be declared accepted and perfected for ever.

Thus we see the perfection of these words: "By Faith . . . live," in regard to the commencement, continuation, and completion of the Christian life upon earth as regards its relation to God. But all men have relations to fulfil to their fellows. It is not sufficient to say, "By grace I am saved, by faith I am made alive, by faith I am kept alive, by faith I shall live for evermore in the

glory of God." There is something to be done for our fellow-men, and if we claim to have this Life, the Church and the world look at us and demand that there shall be the one true proof of our claim, and this leads us naturally to consider

(iii.) The words "By Love . . . serve" (or "be in bondage to") "one another." The preposition here again is *διὰ* "through the operation of," and the meaning of the passage is clear, viz.: that while we have a duty of gratitude to God, we have also a duty of sympathy and of love to our fellow men which we are bound to recognize: that the life of faith lived in the sight of God should be lived out before men, that the very least we can do is to become voluntary slaves working gladly and at all times through the energy of Love, with the conviction that having been "so loved" by God (St. John iii. 16) and by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. v. 14, 15), and having had that Love revealed to us by the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), it is not only a duty but a very necessity of our being to live out that Love as an everlasting token of gratitude to our God, and to show forth that love to men, in order to win them to the same blessed privileges—giving and forgiving, bearing and forbearing, paying and repaying always and for ever in the coinage of Heaven, which is Love—Love—Love at all points.

This is the privilege of believers to their fellow men: saved by grace, living by faith, we can but serve with the bondage of love, for it becomes the

very delight of the soul to exhibit the love of Christ before others.

But there are higher privileges still to be known; we must recognize the fact that God intends us to be "conformed to the image of His Son," and this brings us

(iv.) To speak of the next point of our Motto—"By the Will . . . sanctified," and from this to exhibit and recall to our own souls God's magnificent purpose concerning believers, viz., that He can never be satisfied concerning the work of His hands until they are absolutely one with His own dear Son. "By the which Will we are sanctified"—the Apostle is arguing with the Hebrews (if you remember ch. x.), that there is no longer any necessity at all for other offerings, sacrifices, and burnt offerings, for "this Man offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (mark those words "for ever"), and this sacrifice stands in good stead through all eternity before God, even for the vilest and worst of the human race. And how did Christ offer that sacrifice? By His absolute conformity to the Will of God: "Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God," and the Will of God being our salvation (I Tim. ii. 14), and "the Will of God," as St. Paul says, being "our sanctification" (I Thess. iv. 3), Christ Jesus appears before God as our representative Man, and says: "Thy Will, O Father, has been absolutely accomplished." And what is now the immediate consequence of that Will? "He taketh away the first, that He may establish

the second," and so the Son has taught us one great prayer: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," and that Will is this—that we the redeemed, we the living disciples of the Master, should be sanctified. That is a magnificent word, meaning, "set apart completely and absolutely for the service of God, to do His Will," knowing no other will or law, but by the Holy Ghost indwelling the soul to be taught how to fulfil the Will of the Father, and made more and more willing every day that we should live for His Will to be carried out in us, and hour by hour (would that we could say moment by moment), "to be conformed to the image of His Son," changed into that likeness by the Holy Ghost Himself. This is the Will of God: "By the which Will we *have been sanctified*" (Gr. ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν) says the Apostle, and in this case the preposition is *in* (ἐν) "In the Will . . . sanctified." There is no preposition for the word "By grace . . . saved," there is the preposition ἐκ (*out of*) for the other two—"out of faith" we come to live, "out of love" we come to serve, but it is "in the Will" (Gr. ἐν τῷ θελήματι) that is, of course, in the sphere or power of the Will of God we shall find our perfect sanctification, even as we have already found our dedicatory sanctification. Having been set apart and endowed and made partly "willing in the day of His power," "He which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Christ has taken us into Himself as the One Who absolutely fulfilled the Will of

God, and in that Will there is complete power and sanctification for everyone who will trust the loving Saviour as he should, and that Will will be carried out in us step by step, more and more, until we come to the point where there shall be no life-thought, no being in us, as it were, but to fulfil the Will of our God.

But the consciousness comes across the soul that these things cannot be in their entirety in this mortal flesh, as we would have them, but, conscious of our need and of our hope, conscious of the provision made in Christ, we come

(v.) To the last of our Motto words: "By the Blood . . . enter," "in the Blood," it is in the Gr. (*ἐν τῷ αἵματι*), *i.e.*, "in the sphere and in the power of the blood enter into the Holiest." I am aware that there is no absolute command in this passage, the word "enter" is originally not imperative, meaning rather "Having boldness for the purpose of entrance," but I am equally aware that the special point of the exhortation of the Apostle is that we should make use of the privilege to enter into the Holiest. And what can it mean when it says: "*In* the Blood enter into the Holiest," and there "draw nigh with faith," and take our blessed privilege before God? What can it mean? There are multitudes round about us to-day who would rob us of this glorious privilege, but again and again let your minister, as long as God gives him breath, and as long as these yearly Motto cards are sent forth, exhort you never, never to let go this blessed doctrine

with its efficacy, with its power, with its privileges, with its potentialities—the doctrine of the Blood of the Lord Jesus—cleave to it, I beseech you, as the very central truth of your salvation, for do we not know (all here this morning do, I hope)—(1) that in the blood of Jesus Christ shed for man, there is not merely the power of the infused life-blood, as some would teach us, but that the power and the efficacy of the shed Blood of Christ are the only possible means by which we can be cleansed from our sins, and that it is the judicial action of the Blood that cleanses from all sin?

Do we not know (2) that in the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ there is the only ground of acceptance before God for the guilty? (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

Do we not know (3) that in the Blood of Jesus there is the one thing which preserves us in a position of blessing and power before God, through the presentation of it on our behalf? For remember in Heb. xii. 24, the person of Jesus is specially distinguished from His Blood: “Ye are come . . . to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,” showing that this Blood which Christ presents before God, eternally, as it were, is the one great, efficacious blessing for the souls of the helpless here on earth.

Do we not know (4) that the Blood of Jesus is the one thing by which we overcome all our enemies and accusers? “And they overcome

him (the accuser) by the Blood of the Lamb." (Rev. xii. 11.)

And (5) is it not in the Blood that you and I will find our only hope when we come to our last moment, that because Christ hath died, we therefore may live, and that God, for Christ's sake, hath accepted us "in the Beloved," in the life-blood He freely shed for the guilty?

And thus, this morning, I offer you the one great means of access, the one great means of fellowship right up to the Holy of Holies. Come with your minister as helpless sinners indeed, and say before the world, as well as before devils, and then in all humility before God Himself: "By Grace I am saved," "By Faith I live," "By Love I serve," "By the Will I am sanctified," and lastly, "By the Blood, Oh! my God, give me an entrance, an abundant entrance, into Thy everlasting glory."

Notice that our Motto has three manifest divisions, which require careful study.

The first is absolutely, wholly Divine, and in that we have no part whatever, except to acknowledge God's "Grace," all is of God, and we have simply to say; "Yea and Amen," thanks be to God.

The second division is essentially human, comprehending the God-given activities of "Faith and Love," the *Faith* that takes and appropriates for its own God's gift of salvation, and the *Love* by which gratitude for the mercies and goodness of God is shown.

In the third division we have the wondrous intermingling of the Divine and the Human, the Divine Will being that we should be sanctified, and by that Will carried out in us we should rise back to God. There are demands for consecration on the part of the Holy One, and acts of consecration on the part of the unholy ones, and as He separates us (which is the meaning of sanctification) we find out the fact that we are separated, that we may be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus in every point; and then there comes the final blessing that "*in the Blood,*" every moment that we need peace and forgiveness, fellowship and communion, we pass within the veil, that is, the flesh of Jesus Christ, in the power of, yea, in the very element of, the Blood shed for our sins, and within that veil we are required to enter, we rejoice to enter, and we have the privilege of entering, here by faith, up there if God permits us, by sight, where we shall say from the very depths of the heart : "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name " be all the glory, the praise, the adoration, the gratitude, and the love, for Thy wondrous salvation so freely bestowed through Christ Jesus Thy Son our Lord.

1895.

WHATSOEVER YE DO.

WHATSOEVER YE DO

DO ALL { In the Name of the Lord Jesus.—*Col. iii. 17.*
To the Glory of God.—*1 Cor. x. 31.*
Heartily, as to the Lord.—*Col. iii. 23.*

WHATSOEVER YE DO.

AN all-pervading Motto unquestionably, whatsoever else may be said concerning the words that I have chosen, for it touches us at every single point of our existence; and it was for this purpose, and with this deep conviction, that these words were chosen for your consideration and guidance through the year.

There are some people, and they are to be found in congregations like our own, who say that it savours much of legality when the minister of the Gospel speaks of *doing*; they are so rightly jealous for the finished work of Christ, that they think they show a due consideration for the Lord Jesus and His accomplished salvation if they say that we ought never to speak to one another concerning doing; and that it savours of self-righteousness, or self-assertion, if the minister ever speaks to his people as to what they themselves should do, for the Lord Jesus Christ brings before us the fact that salvation is finished,—that all is done.

My brethren, you can never be too jealous for this glorious truth, and you never can guard it too carefully on all sides; it is a blessed and most glorious fact that the work of salvation is complete and finished, and that we have a right to spell our religion with the four letters—d o n e , instead of with the two—d o . It was the turning point in one man's life when one said to him—"I have learnt to spell my religion with four letters instead of with two." I pray you, guard that truth with all possible jealousy, but, at the same time, let us never forget that faith must be exhibited by action, and that while we guard the glorious doctrine of Justification by Faith, and while it is a fact that salvation is complete in Christ Jesus alone, and revealed to us only by God the Holy Ghost, yet God must demand of His creatures that they should carry out His Holy Will.

The Word of God is constantly impressing upon us the fact that, if we have life, we must live unto God; that if we have become alive, we must live as Christ lived; that if we are taught by the Holy Ghost, we must carry out His instructions; and so I have thankfully chosen for our guidance a word that brings before us in a very remarkable manner the outcome, the necessary product or fruit of "the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," thus bringing the words of this morning's text into connection with those offered to you last year. Let us remember that, while the one is

doctrinal and the other practical, yet that they both form prominent parts of the religion of the Gospel, for, if we saw by last year's text: "By grace we are saved," "by faith we live," "by love we serve," "by the will we are sanctified," and "by the blood we enter into the holiest," it is from that very moment when these doctrines are realized that there ought to come the practice brought before us by this morning's text: "Whatsoever ye do"—from the moment you are in the light of Christ's salvation, the Father's presence, and the Spirit's power,—“do all to the Glory of God” the Father, “In the name of the Lord Jesus,” “Heartily, as to the Lord,” that is, in the Power of the Holy Ghost, for “the Lord is that Spirit,” as St. Paul describes Him to us in 2 Cor. iii., 17.

And so we may thankfully take the words this morning which shall bring home to our lives (which ought to be very practical) the unsearchable riches of Christ in action, as distinguished from the unsearchable riches of Christ to the soul. We had our revelation to the soul last year; we are to have this year our revelation to the principalities and powers of the world around us, who hate the Lord Jesus: therefore, in that revelation let us live, in the words of our Motto: “Heartily, as to the Lord” (*i.e.*, by the power of the Spirit), “In the Name of the Lord Jesus,” “To the Glory of God” the Father.

I have taken these three texts for a special purpose, because they seem, as far as I can

discover, the only three in which the expression occurs—"Whatsoever ye do." There are many texts in which *whatsoever* occurs, there are many in which *do* occurs, and oftentimes together, but in different relations, as for instance, when the heathen women, the wives of Jacob said to him: "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do," and, as if to flaunt the pride of man in the face of God, we read in Jer. xlv. 17: "We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth."

But there are no other texts (except Ecclesiastes ix. 10, which is a kindred passage), so far as I know, that set before us the solemn command of God in reference to what we ourselves are to do; and it is well that they should be brought before us by the Apostle St. Paul, because he is rightly declared to be the great Apostle of Justification by Faith, and it is somewhat remarkable that he should be the one who should bring before us the command *to do*, because it seems to imply a contradiction in terms to some other parts of his writings, and I am very thankful for the assimilation of these truths. It ought to be in all our minds that "Faith without works is dead," as St. James tells us; and St. Paul practically teaches the very same thing, that where there is faith, there must be doing, and that where there is doing, it must be by the power of God the Holy Ghost.

This is what we are to learn to-day, and it is very right that, while we are jealous for doctrine,

we should be zealous for good works. See how St. Paul exhorts Titus, the Bishop of Crete, five times in that short epistle, that a believer is to shew himself "a pattern of good works," that he is to be "zealous of good works," "to be ready to every good work," to be "careful to maintain good works" (twice repeated) before his fellow men, and whenever he is called to meet the powers of the world, manifesting that the Gospel of Salvation does touch a man at every point of his existence.

But before we can proceed to apply these words, I would ask you to bear with me while I show you the striking connection between these three texts which might not occur to everyone on reading the card. It is true that, as far as I know, these are the only passages that contain these words, but that is not the sole reason for my asking you to take them and apply them in everyday life; for instead of *doing* being an unspiritual side of the Gospel, it is just this—it is the Gospel brought into action, in all its fulness and power. For instance, when we observe these words of St. Paul, has it occurred to us that we have brought before us the three great spheres of action in which every man must of necessity live after having heard the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

(1) The Christian in his relation to the whole world,

(2) The Christian in his relation to the Church, and

(3) The Christian in his relation to the home-life.

(1) In his relation to all the world—for St. Paul is speaking to the Corinthians of the way in which we should live out the Gospel in action to all around us, whether Christian or heathen, and he says: You must take care that neither Christians nor heathen have any occasion to say one word against you, and he sums up all by saying: “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.”

(2) In his relation to the Church. In the first part of the 3rd chapter, St. Paul is speaking to the Colossians of our life as a body, and of the Church at large, and he is showing how we are to edify one another, and how we are to build up the true life of the Church in its fulness and grandeur, and he says: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.”

Then (3) he descends to the home-life, and speaks to the slaves (*δοῦλοι*) who are considered as being altogether outside the dignity of men who are free, and he says to them: “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

Again, not only do we find the three great spheres or relations of life included in these three particular passages, but we find reference to the three departments of a man's being in the three texts. Observe, in the first, that which touches upon the body: “Whether ye eat or drink.”

In the second, that which touches upon the spirit : we are to help one another with “ psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.”

In the third, that which specially touches upon the soul. You will hardly understand that word “ heartily ” until you are told that it is in the Greek *ἐκ ψυχῆς*, *out of the soul* ; it is not the common idea of the word heartily, but it means “ out of your souls ” do your work, you servants, you slaves, “ as to the Lord, and not unto men ”—and men go astray altogether when their religion does not descend to the commonplace actions of life.

Once again, you will observe that while this threefold chord of spiritual practice touches upon the very lowest actions of life, and brings out the idea of spiritual action in regard to the functions of even the lowest animal appetites of nature, such as eating and drinking, yet it is here in this particular set of texts that we are brought in a remarkable way into connection with the three great persons of the Godhead.

In the first, I am brought to see God as my Maker, the great Governor of creation ; I must do all then—whether eating or drinking—to His Glory, for the whole universe has been planned and carried out for that end.

In the second, I must see God as my Saviour, my Redeemer, Who “ hath purchased me with His own blood,” and I must do everything “ in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ ” as my own perfect Redeemer.

In the third, I must see that my daily life must be carried out "as to the Lord," in the action of a slave. Now, St. Paul says in 2 Cor. iii. 17, "The Lord is that Spirit," and though I know that immediately after Col. iii. 23, he says in verse 24, "Ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ," yet it is by God the Holy Ghost that the lordship of Christ is brought out to the whole world, and therefore if I would as a servant carry out my rightful action, I must do it as to God the Holy Ghost.

And so I have in these three texts, God as my Maker, God as my Saviour, and God as my Master, and I must never forget that I am to carry out every single detail of my existence to my Maker's glory, in my Mediator's Name, according to my Master's charge and command, and I am never to be free from this all-binding force which compels me to think of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost at every single point of my life.

Then again, as I look at these three verses, and see the wonderful connection established between them, I find that when I enter even upon the very lowest avocations, the smallest things of everyday life, I am charged to think of the three highest possible ambitions or considerations that have ever been set before the human mind:—

(1) The universe exists for the glory of God: then I must even eat and drink to the Glory of God.

(2) Redemption is by the Son of God—God gave His beloved Son as the only Gift He

could bestow for the accomplishment of this mighty work, and I am to think of it when I sit, when I talk, when I move, when I act with regard to my fellowmen.

(3) The power of the Holy Ghost—the Father and the Son sent forth the Holy Spirit that He might manifest the majesty of the Great Jehovah, and yet, when I do the household work of a servant, descend to menial labour, as it is called (God forgive us if we say this contemptuously, because we can scrub the floor even to the glory of God), I am to think that in the lowest action entrusted to me, I am to do it ἐκ ψυχῆς, out of my soul, “as to the Lord, and not unto men,” recognizing the blessed fact that I am a slave of the Lord, and that it is His Spirit Who leads me to Christ, and it is Christ Who leads me to God.

And so I have, in this triplet, a great revelation of the Trinity, the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity, which touches me at every point of the Gospel revelation, at every manifestation of God, at every point of my own existence, at every prospect for eternity, and I cannot rightly carry out even the very smallest detail of my daily existence, except as there is prominently and perpetually before my soul the Glory of God the Father, the Name of God the Son, and the Power of God the Holy Ghost.

Is there not a motive power here for high action? Is there not a revelation to our souls of something grand in our existence? But is there

not also a staggering and overwhelming awe at such a revelation? And is it possible for any to whom I speak? Is it not too splendid to attain to in the midst of a life which is filled with difficulty and daily duties which touch only upon the low, the temporal, and the material? I am conscious that, as I trace this wondrous thought, many, very many, will be saying to themselves—It is all too ethereal, too sublimated and ideal for any man or woman engaged, as all of us are, in the hard dangers and trying conditions of a life of mortality and sin!

Then we have to say to God boldly, that He has put before us things which He knows are impossible, and God shall be the Author of failure and not man. Is that possible? St. Paul brings this exhortation before the Corinthian Church, knowing well that it was placed in the midst of a carnal and yet most highly educated, self-assertive people, as is the case with the Church in London at the present day. He brings the charge before the Colossian Church, placed in the midst of a people who were degraded heathens, in utter darkness, and yet it is to each of these Churches, surrounded by difficulties which must have transcended our own, that he gives the command—"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God," "In the name of the Lord Jesus," "Heartily, as to the Lord."

And so, if Creation has been called into existence for the glory of God; if redemption has been carried out by Christ, in order that His

Name might be above every name, "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they"; if the Holy Ghost came in order to exhibit the mightiness of the power of God, and to carry out the authority of God among His enemies, or in the midst of His enemies, then God must have meant that this thing should be done which He charges upon the Church, or else we have to face the solemn fact that God has been defeated, and must be defeated to the end by His enemies.

This we must acknowledge at once is impossible, and so we know that though it may not be carried out perfectly and absolutely in this world, and cannot be, so long as the lingering taint of sin mars every point of our existence, yet there must be some possibility for the fulfilment of the charge that "Whatsoever we do" we should do in this three-fold motive power, as set before us by St. Paul.

Where, then, do we look for the basis or foundation upon which these wondrous principles can be carried out in daily action? And, of course, the answer is:—In what we understand by the Gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ, revealed by the spirit, and given by the Father.

And when we speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ, revealed by the Spirit, what mean we? We look back to the moment of God's creation, when God beheld all the things that He had

called into existence, and pronounced them to be "very good," and at that moment, unquestionably, everything that was done would glorify God, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented as moving "upon the face the waters." But the fall of man, through sin, marred this, and it seemed as if the will of God were absolutely overthrown, and that man were completely separated from his Maker. But again the Lord Christ is revealed from heaven, on purpose to re-establish the link that had been broken, and to bring down the Godhead to the manhood. The Christ places or allows Himself to be placed before the world as the One in whom the purpose of God is to be carried out, and during the whole course of His life we see the complete fulfilment of this one purpose—that everything can be done to the glory of God. The night before He dies, He has one word to say: "I have glorified Thee on the earth." The night that He is born into this world there is one cry throughout the spacious universe: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." He has fulfilled that wondrous word brought before us so prominently in the first lesson of to-day (Isaiah lx.), where we find the terms—glory, glorious, glorified—combined more often than in any other passage of God's Word containing an equal number of verses.

And how was it fulfilled? By uniting the manhood to the Godhead, and then allowing the Godhead to so permeate the manhood that every

desire, every taste, every thought, every feeling, every word, every work is instinct with the Divinity as a principle, and this carried out to the Glory of God. You could not expect the Christ to show forth the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus, because that would have been self-glorification—He glorified God the Father. But wait—"And suddenly" (on the day of Pentecost) "there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind," and those poor, helpless peasants by nature, you find, in a moment, uplifted to a consciousness of power, foreign altogether to their former existence; and what was it that they began to speak of and to shew? The Name of the Lord Jesus: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts ii. 38). "His Name, through faith in His Name, has made this man strong, whom ye see and know" (iii. 16). And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto Thy servants that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus" (iii. 29, 30). "Exorcists took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus" (xix. 13). All through the Acts of the Apostles, and the early history of the Church, you have one great manifestation—it is the power of the Name of the Lord Jesus at every point of these men's lives.

And why? Because they have learnt as willing slaves to put themselves under God the Holy Ghost as Lord, night and day. At every

point, these faithful men (as long as they remain faithful), these willing slaves look up and say "heartily, ἐκ ψυχῆς, as to the Lord, and not unto men," "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" we live, "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" we stand before the Church and the world, and speak "to the Glory of God"; we would eat or drink, live or die, exactly as God our Father, our Saviour, our Master may choose; everything, and all things "whatsoever we do," let it all be to God and to God alone.

This was the motive power that actuated the Apostles; this is the great basis upon which alone the work God has commanded us to do, can be carried out. And how does it come individually into action? "The Father sent the Son," and the Son sent the Spirit or Holy Ghost, and He, coming to each particular individual soul, to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," offers life that they may live, and the dead can hear the voice in some mysterious way, and are willing or unwilling to receive the gift of life. If willing, the Holy Ghost can enter into a man, and the Spirit of God assimilates and unites the man to Himself. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." From that moment the Spirit works upon the soul, the heart, the mind, and the body; and He not simply begs, He *demand*s (let us understand that clearly), He *demand*s that every faculty of the man be yielded to God "in the Name of the Lord Jesus"; He, requires that we should be yielded over to Him,

and as we yield to Him, point by point, there comes in the very life of the Lord Himself, and that life affects our life, so that we cannot act, work, speak, or think, without reference to our Master.

Have you ever noticed the coward child who lives under the terror of the master's rod, or who is under a nurse who does not deal gently? You see that, at last, the child has the very instinct of terror, so that he cannot look, speak, act, or even think, without gazing out with the mind's eye at the person who dominates his life. Now, not by fear, but by love; not by terror, but by attraction, God the Holy Ghost demands that we should be influenced, till every faculty of our being goes out to Him; and he looks for us, as we get the charge, to bow down to Him and say: "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth," and we obey with willing will.

And from that, the man rises to something higher, and he begins to find that the willing slave can be used for mighty ends for the Master; and out of the world into the Church the servant is taken by God the Holy Ghost to begin "to do" "in the Name of the Lord Jesus," and evil spirits are subject to the man that has yielded himself a slave to the power of the Holy Ghost, and who has found out, through Him, the power of Christ's Name. Then that man begins to be of use in the Church; and powerful against the devil, he wins souls for God. He begins, as men

did in the early Church, to draw men to God through Jesus Christ. And then there comes at last, though not as we could wish on earth—for here it is that I find, in regard to God the Father, that every single Christian fails—but there does come, in a degree, that noblest, most blessed of human experience that, “whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God” the Father.

Oh! brethren, I have often dared to say that we may rise by the Spirit, through the Christ, up to the Father; but we all seem to know so little of that passage: “Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; . . . And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all *the fulness of God*.” This has always seemed to me the most glorious, magnificent revelation that can be given, and I humbly confess that neither from myself nor through my friends have I ever been able to comprehend the deep and wondrous meaning of the words with regard to this text: “That ye might be filled with (or into) all the fulness of God.”

But I would say that though to rise to the idea of the Glory of God even in eating and drinking and “whatsoever we do” seems to be beyond one’s noblest aspirations in the body, yet God says that it is to be. “In the name of the Lord Jesus,” the Apostle charges upon us that it should become our experience daily, and I believe that more and more, every day we live, we shall find that if the

Spirit is working in us, if Christ's Name is precious to us, that we shall rise upwards (our texts being reversed in experimental order, as it must be) to do all to the glory of God.

And now, though my heart is full, and there is much I would say that I must leave, I ask you in closing whether such a text as this, taken in its entirety, and connecting us with the Father, Son, and Spirit, for vital godliness and power, does not magnify and glorify the most simple actions of our daily life? You ask, perhaps, why such a text has been chosen; why a man, who might preach of the unsearchable riches of Christ, should bring his people down to the subject of eating and drinking, to the work of a servant, to the duties of social life? My answer is this—Our lives are for the most part made up of trifles, and these trifles are just the excuse the average Christian makes for not doing all to the Glory of God. Charge home upon the average Christian the blessed privilege of doing everything for his Saviour and his holy Father in heaven, and his answer is: "I am but an insignificant mite; I cannot do great things—to glorify God is a noble work, and such a one as I cannot aspire to that dignity."

My brother, every man can eat and drink, and when St. Paul has drawn us up (working my text backwards as I think I am justified in doing) to the noblest, highest realm that can be reached in the universe, then it is that he says, as if in sharpest contrast, yet closest connection,

“Whether therefore ye eat or drink” (you can all do that) “or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.”

And the Glory of God—what is it? Have you thought what it was to St. Paul himself, when he says: “Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” And what was that? It was to glorify God his Saviour in all things.

Have you ever thought what it was to Christ Himself to glorify God? As I have already said, the Angels sang Glory to God at His birth, and as He passes away from the world, He has but one single word to say: “Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth.”

Have you ever thought what it is to the great body of the Angelic host that surround the throne in heaven to glorify God? They have one single psalm: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and honour, and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created.”

Have you ever thought what it will be in the new creation to glorify God? We have but one idea of the new creation when it comes down out of heaven; it descends bringing “the Glory of (the) God,” “and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

The Glory of God! the Glory of God! It is the one thing that touches the whole universe, the one thing that binds the atoms of creation together. It was for that, that He called creation into existence.

And you and I are told that we may work as the slave, by the power of the Spirit, in our homes to-day, that we may live in our relation to the Church, and to the world to the "Glory of God," whether eating or drinking or "whatsoever we do." This is our call to-day—

"I would not work my soul to save,
For that my Lord hath done,
But I would work like any slave,
From love to God's dear Son."

This is what we are allowed to do, and I would ask my people to-day to do it: "As to the Lord, and not unto men," to go out and to let our lives be touched at every point by this wondrous principle—to glorify God—

(1) In the little home circle, where we are watched so closely by servants and children, who may say after we die—there was not much in that life to bring praise and glory to God.

(2) To glorify God in the Church, to bring spiritual life to the whole. Dear brethren, we need it. I would to God that we were all bound together,—that you would all register yourselves as members of the Congregation, and that we might all meet round the Table of the Lord: "Singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord."

(3) And then, lastly, you will have to go home to eat and drink, and to show to the world by what principle your spiritual life is affected, and to let it be seen whether your body is a slave unto God. Can you not learn the lesson: "By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," and so "I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and "Whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do," may I "do all to the glory of God."—AMEN.

PART I.

1896.

SERVANTS OF SIN.

Servants of Sin . . . What Fruit had ye *Then*?

Now. . . Servants to GOD, ye have your Fruit unto
Holiness.—*Rom. vi. 20, 21, 22.*

SERVANTS OF SIN.

THE passage is one that deserves the closest attention throughout, and heed should be given to every part of it. Shall I just read the three verses, 20, 21, and 22 ?—"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye *then* in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But *now*, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Servants ye were, servants ye are, servants ye must be to the very last moment of your lives. Yea, shall I hesitate to carry you one step further, when the word of the living God is so clear to us? Servants ye will be throughout all the ages of eternity, and that in the deep and solemn sense of the word—servants (*Gr.* δοῦλοι) (bond-slaves, as is now very frequently translated, and as it is given in the margin of the Revised Version), for when the new creation is put before us in the pages of God's Revelation, one of the special glories thereof is that "His servants shall serve Him" (*Gr.* δοῦλοι), shall give to Him

spiritual temple-service (*Gr.* λατρεύουσιν) as priests of the living God, and that they are slaves, even while they are called to behold His face: for the next words to "His servants shall serve Him," are "They shall see His face"; and though in the marvels of that new creation, they shall be satisfied absolutely, and shall then only "be conformed to the image of His Son," because they "shall see Him as He is," yet even there no higher dignity, no more solemn privilege of being can be accorded by God to His glorified creatures than that "His servants shall serve Him."

However unpalatable this may be in the days of our ignorance and self-assertion, on earth, it is the great law of God's Holy Word; and this is the essential law of our being, that man is so constituted, that he must be a slave, and it is for this that I have chosen the words of our Motto Text, for as I draw nearer myself to the great beyond, I feel that this one great law of life should be pressed upon myself, and upon my people, this law which is exhibited in every part of creation—man, by his nature and constitution (even before he knew the power of evil), is, and must be ever, a slave. It is contrary to our instincts, and yet it is clearly for our advantage, that just so long as we are creatures, we should recognise the solemn truth, that we must be in subservience either to the Creator or to the Usurper; we cannot be otherwise than slaves, as long as we are creatures, and if we have escaped, as men would call it, in insolence and pride from

the domination or dominion of the Lord God Almighty, it is but to put ourselves in the hands of another, for slaves we must be, as long as we are limited beings.

There is an awful truth in this which men fail to recognize, simply because they are seeking what they call liberty; but surely Almighty God has made it plain in every part of His Holy Word, that they who call themselves free, and try to exercise their freedom, in order that they may thereby establish the great principle of Self-Control, are invariably brought into the darkest bondage that can be conceived. It is an anomaly, if you will, or a paradox, we should rather say, in God's Word, that the one creature whom, of all others, God has so constituted that he is to exercise the greatest privilege of the creature—freewill, should be the only one that is a slave. We have freewill, and we are to use it to be slaves in the right direction. Use it wrongly, it produces bitterness; use it rightly, it produces blessing; and because we have freewill we must exercise that freewill, either in the choice of Him to be our Lord, who is our God and Creator, and therefore seeks to bless; or of the one who, being a usurper, will drag us down to everlasting destruction. It is an anomaly in the eyes of man by nature; it is a paradox, as so much else is in God's Word, but it is a blessed truth to those who rightly apprehend it, for remember what the Apostle St. Peter (II Peter ii. 19) says: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the

servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (*Gr.* δεδούλωται), into the condition of absolute slavery, by whomsoever he is overcome. And our blessed Lord Himself has put the matter so tersely, so solemnly, when speaking to the Jews: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" and again, speaking to His own most blessed saints, who shall be peculiarly ready to meet Him, when He returns for the marriage supper of the Church: "Blessed are those *servants* or *slaves* whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." Slaves to Satan, or slaves to God; slaves by domination, or slaves by the dominion of blessedness—in the one state or the other, we must be found, except we are caught, as most people who become Christians are caught for a time, into that semi-condition of liberty and bondage alternately, which seems to satisfy the aspiration, though not the consciences or hearts, of so many who call themselves Christians. St. Paul has put the matter before us strikingly in Rom. vi. 16: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants (or slaves) ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" And if these be the laws that God Himself has established; if this be clearly the experience of mankind—how vain, how futile is the idea of any who imagine that they can escape and become free men to control themselves. Man was never made for Self-Control,

and the attempt to control Self has brought but the darkest bondage that can be known by the creature.

We turn therefore, without hesitation, to declare from God's Word that there is no escape and no discharge in this matter for any human being; and while my Motto Text shall lie, please God, before the eyes of a great multitude in their homes, may this one thought be driven by the Holy Ghost into the heart that takes the truth by means of the eye—servants ye are, servants ye must be, servants ye ought to be with all your hearts, in the only direction in which blessing can be known.

But here—as in everything else, apparently, that concerns God and man—there would seem to be a remarkable Trinity in Unity; a Trinity in that there are three developments or possibilities with regard to this matter of slavery; and a Unity in that these three are found in a single man, and that sometimes men pass from one to the other without understanding what is the real law of their life, and they seek to escape from the great law that God would have them obey, and by which He would have them governed for ever.

(1). We are born into the world in a condition of sin, and, owing to that fact, there is in every single child of Adam a strange, unconscious, involuntary bondage in which we render obedience to the principle called sin, and to the power of Satan, and to the emissaries whom he employs; and that, too, in the case of little ones, not knowing

that they are in bondage, and that they are yielding obedience to an evil principle which is hostile to God. For, remember, the law of truth concerning slavery is defined by St. Paul, thus: "His servants ye are to whom ye obey," and the little ones, even the youngest, obey the principle of evil, only the obedience is, in their case, unconscious and involuntary.

(2). Then there comes a second stage in which the same being may be found perpetually struggling, at one time against God, at another time against evil, and in consequence there is a life in which—partly conscious, partly unconscious; partly voluntary, partly involuntary—obedience is rendered, first to one master and then to another; and this is the life of division, the life of doubt and distress, which apparently seems to satisfy the aspirations of the majority of those who call themselves believers.

(3). But there is a third life which is found in the man who yields himself wholly to one master, to the Lord Jesus Christ; not to the principle of evil, but to the Fountain Head of all good, and this life is one in which, all consciously, all voluntarily, the man is a slave in every faculty and fibre of his being, yielded over that he may be the servant of the living God in every thought, word, and deed, in every power and prospect wherewith he has been endowed as a sentient being.

And as we proceed to think of these things, we shall see how very strikingly the law has been

laid down for us, that we should serve to be free, and be free to serve; that is to say, there is no true liberty for the human being until he has learned that the law of slavery is that which constitutes him free; but it must be by a conscious knowledge that his slavery is voluntary, and that he has yielded himself to God and to none else.

For, remember — the first condition — the unconscious and involuntary slavery of an infant is inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve. It was produced by the fact that, for a single moment the soul's eye of our first mother was turned from God to Satan, and in that instant the battle was won by the evil and lost by the good; Eve was, alas! the traitor by whom all was lost. But, from the moment she fell, there was brought into the world a possibility of two other conditions to which we are indebted, not to our mother or to ourselves, but to our God and to Jesus Christ.

For the second state of slavery, partly conscious, partly unconscious, we are indebted to the effects of Christ's atoning work. He died, and purchased liberty at the price of His own blood, and having purchased this liberty, He has put it forth as the possession or property of the human race, and by means of conscience, and by the instruction of God's Holy Word, and by the working of the Holy Ghost, there comes home at last to many a soul the thought that things are not what they ought to be, while living for self,

the world, and the flesh, and then the prickings of conscience working upon the man lead him to a life of struggle and strife, and sometimes the spirit of good conquers, and sometimes the spirit of evil, and the man is half a slave to the powers of good, and half a slave to the powers of evil.

But beyond all this there lies, put before us in God's Word, the possibility of enjoying a life *now*, in which man recognizes his past condition of ruin by nature, and the accomplishment of the salvation brought to him by God in Christ Jesus under the title of Redeemer, and takes not only the gift of regeneration or new birth—that is, the blessed fact that he is born of God, and belongs to God—but he learns that to trust Christ means that he *entrusts* himself to Christ, and this glorious Gospel becomes now what has been well defined by Dr. Moule, a “*tenet*” (from the Latin “he holds,” playing upon the word), because it holds us fast, and is not only a thing that we lay hold of. Man in the second class of slavery may have laid hold of the truth, but a man can never keep hold; the Lord God Himself holds the man, while the man holds the truth, and as God holds the man, the man becomes a willing slave, instead of an involuntary one: he takes the place of a slave towards God, for which Christ has designed him; he takes it with gratitude, and his whole soul, faculties, and being are yielded over unto God, because he lives not to himself but to God; and has in every word, every thought, every deed, no other instinct; all his inner life is

held by God in the law of obedience, which springs from love and from nothing else. Now the life and conduct begin to be, momentarily, shall I say, absolutely, almost half-consciously—absolutely as from God's side, relatively as from man's—one blessed unfolding of itself, instant by instant, in acts of obedience, words of submission, thoughts of devotion, all of them rising to God as an acceptable sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is not perfectionism—that we dare not preach, for sin ever remains within—but the life that I desire to put forward is a life in which, so far as man has a will which he can distinguish from his involuntary action, so far as he has a determination which he can distinguish from the great power which presses from within, he sets his face determinately to obey God, and to know no other Master; whether the world may approve or hate, whether Satan may attack or soothe him, the man knows no other law but this—"My Lord and my God, Thou art my Master in everything, and I am Thy slave," the voluntary slave, the consciously yielded being that hands itself over for God to use, for God to dictate to, and to govern. This is the person of whom the Apostle is speaking when he says: "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Observe, though it is somewhat difficult to explain, perhaps, what one seems to see in the distinction — observe the difference between

“servants *of* sin” and “servants *to* God.” So little do men discern the fine niceties of Scripture, that when I wrote this text out as my Motto, and exhibited it to a friend, himself a Bible student, he remarked : “ O ! surely you have made a mistake, it cannot be ‘servants *of* sin’ and ‘servants *to* God’ ”; but so it is in the original. “Servants of sin”—that would seem to me to imply that instinctively and, as of necessity, involuntarily, the child who comes into the world is a slave to the power called sin, but when once he belongs to God, having been freed at such a cost, *i.e.*, the blood of Jesus Christ, and made an heir of everlasting life, he determinately, voluntarily, consciously as a *man*, not as a babe only, but as a man, hands himself over *to* God, and says—“a slave *to* God, with every faculty I have, because I am now the child of God, one who loves to please his Heavenly Father.”

This, then, is the thought which I would place before you, that (1) by nature we are in a slavery which is all of the evil one, and all acted out in evil, and the end thereof is death. Then (2) there comes a slavery in which there is an awful struggle, perpetuated moment by moment, between the principles of evil and good; a struggle that necessarily exhibits itself in the actions, first of good and then of evil, in a man; and the effect of this is partly life and partly death; one moment he seems to live unto God, the next he is crying in anguish as in Romans vii. 24, “Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the

body of this death?" And then (3) there may come (and it is to this that I exhort myself and my congregation who kindly accept the Motto Text from their minister), a life, in which the law of obedience becoming the law of delight to the soul, the man is handed over to God, all is for God, all is by God, and, so necessarily, "the end is everlasting life." And this end is begun upon earth, it does not only come a long while hence as the ultimate object and attainment. The enjoyment that springs from this action is commencing now, and carried out in perpetuity for ever, and the man knows what it is to have now "everlasting life," which is "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What more need I say on this part of our Motto than to press every word of it upon the soul and conscience of every person in this Church? Need I dwell longer on the meaning of the word slave? It must suffice simply for me to say just this: (1) that when we speak of slaves or servants, we are bringing before you now the necessary condition of man by reason of his being, as a creature. (2) that when we speak of slavery we have no longer the right to think of it as simply a burdensome duty enforced at the point of the sword, or by the rod. We mean that which expresses itself in the obedience of the creature, and that to whomsoever or whatsoever it is rendered, whether to the principle of good or of evil, that man is a slave to him or it; and (3) that we may be either the servants of God or the servants of corruption, so

that necessarily the end will be exactly in accordance with the principle to which we choose to be obedient.

And now, turning from this as a mere definition, in order to impress the thought constantly upon our brains and hearts, I would ask—is it accepted by all before me as a fact that we are by nature “servants of sin”? That from the very moment we are born into this world there is a principle working within which dominates the whole of the infant, and develops itself in the child, and too often takes possession of the whole of the man, and keeps possession until the Holy Ghost begins to work on the soul for God. It matters not for one instant how brilliant or how beautiful to the eye of nature the results of the working of the principle of evil may be; it matters not that men may say—What a lovely child! What a beautiful woman! What a splendid man! I ask you—Of what, and from what, do the person’s thoughts, and words, and deeds arise? Is it from God? If not, it is not from the principle of life, and as the principle of life has only one contrast, which is the principle of death—if the thoughts, words, and deeds of anyone cannot be consciously declared to spring from the principle of life, they must inevitably spring from the opposite which is the principle of death. And, therefore, however beautiful, however glorious or splendid they may be to the eyes of our nature, and in the sight of our fellow-men, they have no life or power in them, and the person is simply the slave of some-

thing that is not God, and, if not God, then it is evil.

And, if evil, "What fruit have ye"? Surely, friends, every work is intended to bring forth some result, which goes by the proper name of fruit; the law of analogy which God has traced ever in nature exhibits this as a necessity—that whatsoever is sown, that shall be reaped; that if we sow, we expect the harvest; if we labour: "The labourer is worthy of his hire." You (if there be any before me now) who have not "tasted that the Lord is gracious," what fruit have you ever seen that satisfied the labourer as the result of his labour that is not of God? Take the child who gives way to the sin of disobedience; take the child of to-day, who is specially the child of the 19th century, who asserts his independence against his parents, and against the laws which have hitherto so beautifully obtained in this country, take that child and ask yourself—What fruit has he for this sin of disobedience? You watch the child, and everyone, except the misguided parents, perhaps, will recognize this—the child is reaping as he has sown; he has sown to the flesh, and of the flesh he shall reap corruption (Gal. vi. 8); he has sown for self, and he is reaping bondage; he has sown for evil, and he is reaping slavery of the darkest and most degraded kind. Take the man who lives, if you will, for science or art, or for the indulgence of fleshly appetites; take anyone who has not given over the life to God, however beautiful he may

appear in the eyes of the world, and what fruit has he? He reaps what he sows. Witness the girl who goes into society, and makes that the end and aim of life, until her natural beauty perishes, and she has nothing left, nothing but the manifestation of corruption, the bitter seeds of folly which ripen to pain, and anguish, and disappointment here below, with darkness and no hope for the world to come, unless a blessed change is produced by the Holy Spirit. Surely we must acknowledge, as St. Paul says in Ephes. v. 2, that these are "*unfruitful* works of darkness"; there is no real fruit; it is simply labour without gain; pain, disappointment, and bitterness, without any bliss; because the will is the bondsman to the power that is of earth and not of God, and is in the sad condition of bondage to sin.

But my brother, though not *fruitful*, alas! we must allow with St. Paul that the slavery of sin is *resultful*, and resultful enough, for he goes on to show that "the end of those things is death." Who that has ever watched generations coming and going, as every grey-haired man or woman has been called by God to do, can fail to see palpably that, while men live for sin and self-indulgence, though calling themselves free, they are servants in bondage to corruption, and that corruption is spreading over everything earthly, just so long as the life is without God. Look into the world, and what do you see? Men who seem to enjoy pleasure for a time, which ends

but in disappointment, bringing bodily decay, and decay leading to death. So it is all through the world.

But turn to the fact that there is another side to the picture, and that, while we have to acknowledge that the servants of sin have no real fruit, and only bring themselves deeper and deeper into the degradation and misery of death, there is a brighter side now, now, now: God's *now* is always blessing: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation"; but what shall we say of the "now" of deliverance from dark bondage of soul into brilliant bondage? This—that the moment we become "servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness." Mark the stage by which the blessings come, we are "made free from sin" (*Gr.* ἐλευθερώω) being set at liberty. Strange paradox you call it; a contradiction of terms—"Servants to God" and "being made free"—but that is the Gospel; Why? Because the Son of God has purchased liberty for us at the price of His most precious blood, and having purchased it, He communicates it by means of the Holy Ghost, and in a moment a man, if "willing in the day of His power," may take the revelation of an accomplished fact that he is set free, that he is delivered, and he gives praise to God when he appropriates this fact. But that moment there comes over him the working of conscience, which has never been quickened before: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin," and the prickings of conscience lay bare what

is working within the man, and he cannot continue in the old ways, because he belongs to God, who bought him by the blood of His Son. He must give to God what is due to him, remembering what the Lord Jesus says, "Ye cannot serve (or be a slave to) God and Mammon." But even the quickened heart, enlightened spirit, and roused conscience too often fail to make men take up "the *fulness* of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." Take hundreds of Christians in this Church, and I fear I am only putting forth truth when I say that they are living divided lives. There was once the undivided slavery, in which some of you were; but what of *now*? Half conscious, half unconscious; half voluntary, half involuntary, your life would seem to be lived, up one day in contact with God, down another into bondage with the devil; and this life is lived by so many Christians, who speak of themselves as believers, but who know little of "the joy of the Lord as their strength." You watch them, and you see that their life is half happy, half unhappy; half in heaven, and half on earth; they seem to know no perpetuity of peace, no absolute power with God. To what is it due? Partly, I suppose (God only knows) to ignorance, and an unenlightened conscience; partly, I suppose, to fear of the old masters—the world, the flesh, and the devil—and they go back to them out of cowardice when they ought to belong to God; but chiefly, I think, it springs from this—that we preachers have never done justice to the

position of man and made him recognize the fact that he must be a slave; a slave he is made, and a slave he is to be, so long as eternity itself shall last. And you are called to be now slaves determinately, slaves every moment, slaves with the will; yes to find that there is in the life of holy slavery a law, a principle, a will, *freewill*, as our brother, Dr. Moule, expresses it so beautifully in his Commentary on the Romans: "St. Paul has appealed to the moral reason of the regenerate soul. Now he speaks straight to the will. You are, with infinite rightfulness, the bondmen of your God. You see your deed of purchase; it is the other side of your warrant of emancipation. Take it, and write your own unworthy names with joy upon it, consenting and assenting to your Owner's perfect rights. And then live out your life, keeping the autograph of your own surrender before your eyes. Live, suffer, conquer, labour, serve, as men who have themselves walked to the Master's door, and presented the ear to the awl which pins it to the doorway, each in his turn saying 'I will not go out free.'" Let us say that to our Lord, and it is the beginning of the new life, that ends in everlasting life, and in all the blessings of God's own Presence.

The second branch of my subject will show you that the law of liberty is the law of love; the law of love is the law of devotion; the law of devotion is the law of bondage; but "the end is everlasting life."

Oh! friends, I stand by Joshua, and I say to my people as he did: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," and I hear all Israel saying: "We will serve the Lord, for He is our God"; and I hear Joshua replying (and I, as Joshua, have to say to some of you): "Ye cannot serve the Lord." Why? Because your "hearts are not inclined unto the Lord God of Israel."

I stand by the prophet Elijah on Carmel, and I hear him appealing to Israel and saying: "If the Lord be God, follow Him," and the people shout: "The Lord He is God; the Lord He is God," and they go back to their idols in a few hours. May God save my people from that dreadful sin!

I stand by David, the type of Christ, and I hear Ittai the Gittite say: "As the Lord liveth, and as the King liveth, surely in what place my Lord the King shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

Once more the King's servants are standing with David, and they are saying: "Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint." Is it so, brethren? This is the service of love; this is the slavery of joy; this is the blessedness of God's redeemed creation. To it we are invited; for it we have been saved; in it is bliss, and the only bliss that man will ever know, the bliss of eternal life, because it is the life of holiness; and the life of holiness glorifies God and makes us like the Lord Jesus Christ. To this may God in His mercy bring every soul that is now in this Church.—AMEN.

PART II.

1896.

SERVANTS TO GOD.

Now :—

“Servants to God, ye have your fruit
unto holiness.”—*Rom. vi. 22.*

SERVANTS TO GOD.

IN contrast to the “unfruitful works of darkness” produced by sin, St. Paul shows that there is another principle which is by the grace of God to become the dominant power when we have reached the glory of God in Heaven, which principle ought to be working in us, from the moment that we have received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is that dominant principle which he contrasts with sin? It is what he calls here the principle of obedience, and he makes obedience, as it were, another personage which takes the place of sin when the man is brought into the liberty of a child of God through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Instead of “sin reigning unto death,” righteousness reigns now through “obedience unto life.” But how far does it take possession? Just so far as the man is willing, and no further; just so far as faith takes what God has provided in Christ Jesus; just so far as glory shall take us, and to that, thank God, there is no limit; it is a

boundless prospect of enjoyment that in the glory we shall "be conformed to the image of God's Son," for "we shall be like Him"; then we shall have the pathway of progress open before us; the progress in holiness, still with the vast infinity of God beyond; something for us to bathe in like an ocean of bliss; something for us to drink in like a boundless fountain; something to work out; something for enjoyment that can never be fathomed; something that can never be fully attained, to endless eternity.

Such is the prospect that lies before you, and which we now ask you to take up. There is, in the passage before us, a *now*, "but now"—and God's "buts" are always for blessing. He takes us from something dark to something bright; from something of perdition to something of Paradise and bliss, and He takes us by this little word "*but now*" out of the kingdom of Satan, "into the kingdom of His dear Son," provided only that we accept the provision. God's blessings are absolutely completed in the person of Jesus Christ. Man's prerogative, which he asserts to his own ruin too often, is that of freewill; then, my brother, if freewill is to be exercised to-night by any soul not yet "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," I pray you to exercise it by saying—"I take the gift that God has provided—that 'gift of God,' which is 'eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,' " and, remember, it is not simply a sealed-up packet which you hold for contemplation, and which you are to present as a passport

at the gate of heaven, but something that passes, as it were, from the Heavenly God Himself into your very being. You take the life of the Son of God, the very life to which Christ has attained through death, by resurrection, and up the passage to glory He has obtained the glorified resurrection life at the right hand of God. You take that into your soul as a gift from God "*in* Jesus Christ our Lord" (as the Greek reads). You take Him as your salvation; but your salvation means deliverance, free access to, and possession of; and as you take deliverance from, you take the fact that you are set free from the old taskmaster with all his powers and prerogatives, and you are translated up to the very throne, and you can take your place where Christ is with the Father upon the Throne of God; you take possession of the very Spirit of God Himself, and that Spirit, entering into the soul of man, claims him for His own and holds him.

Now, a multitude of Christians commit a tremendous folly in their own experience, in thinking they can take, as it were, the parcel which God offers them, without taking the contents, and receiving them into their being; and how mad we are to think that this poor Book will take us to the gates of heaven and land us safe before Almighty God. It will weigh you down to a hell darker and more awful than any other man's hell to have had a Bible that you did not use well; to have had a Bible that told you of God's love to your soul, and yet never to have taken

it in ; nothing can make anguish more bitter than to have been in churches like this, where Jesus Christ has been offered freely, and you would not take Him ; you sat still to criticize, and then went out to live for the world, the flesh, and the devil, instead of for God. It is an awful responsibility, week by week, to be offered God's Christ and then to live still in the flesh, as "servants to sin," not so much now "servants *of* sin" (which seems, as it were, to be the natural state), but when we become "servants *to* sin," it means that we do it determinately, that we set ourselves to that thing ; and there are men and women who claim to belong to Jesus who are wilfully giving themselves to sin.

But if I take Christ, He takes me. I cannot take Christ and be the same that I was one hour before. The very moment I take Christ, I take Him for my Lord—for my God. Do you think that there was no change in Thomas Didymus that day between his going into that little upper chamber, where the disciples were met together, and when he went out again after he had seen Jesus ? Was there no difference in him ? He came in a man who professed to love Jesus, who mourned over his death ; a man who had said : "Let us also go, that we may die with Him ;" he came in with his heart depressed and weary, with a hope not likely, it seemed, to be realized ; but, suddenly, he saw, he believed, and he said, "My Lord and my God," and from that moment Thomas Didymus was not only what we call a

believer, but a changed man completely, by taking Christ as his Master in everything.

This is what we have to do, and I have endeavoured to show that all this is really involved in my Motto Text : Now bondslaves, bondslaves to God—He claims His right in you ; you have no liberty outside God ; you have no freedom outside your Heavenly Father ; you have no willing existence outside your Saviour Himself ; you know no dictation but that of the Holy Ghost ; and you have no intention except to obey exactly the laws that your God may trace for you. Do you call this a bitter bondage ?

Perhaps no better test could be given to men and women like ourselves than to take these words of our Motto Card and to say—Which do I like with all my heart to do ? Which am I set upon—to be a slave, and yet to call myself a free man ; to enjoy sin, or be a slave to God, so that His Will becomes liberty, and the very law of my being ? Surely, if we tested ourselves in that way, we should discover whether we are indeed the faithful children of God.

My beloved brethren, it is to test you, that that text, chosen of God, I believe, is set before you ; and now what I ask you to notice is, that the Apostle St. Paul gives us many striking contrasts in many ways. He says first of all—We are by nature “servants of sin,” and you will remember that he does not by sin only mean the filthy things that dishonour our manhood openly, —those degraded things that bring discredit upon

a man, such as being drunk or guilty of adultery, etc. He does not allude to these necessarily, though they will come, if we yield, step by step, to the domination of sin; but he means the principle of evil as opposed to God, and he says that we are "the servants to sin." In verse 19 he speaks of us as being "servants *to* uncleanness and *to* iniquity," and so going step by step determinately—at first, it was according to the natural principle (that is my idea of the use of the word *to* in contrast with the little word *of*), then he seems to say to you go on, if you set your face away from God, from the unconscious, involuntary service of sin, which a child exhibits in his mother's arms, to the determined and wilful service of sin—to iniquity and to uncleanness you give yourself over, *and the end must be death*. And death is *not* annihilation. I believe that it is absolutely not so in the whole of the Scripture; death is not annihilation, destruction does not mean annihilation. Overthrow, ruin, and every other word of the kind used in God's Word seem never to mean annihilation—because we are spoken of as being "dead" by nature, when we are walking in the world—that is not annihilation. The man who passes away from this world is said to be "dead,"—that is not annihilation. It means simply a change or transfer of the conditions of existence.

So—There is (1) sin as a principle, then (2) uncleanness as a taste; (3) next iniquity as an act; and (4) "the end of these things is death."

Now see the opposite to this—St. Paul says that there is a principle which is introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is the principle of obedience, to which we have become servants first of all, then “servants to righteousness unto holiness,” then servants to holiness unto God—and the end, “everlasting life,” which God purposes in its fulness of fruition.

Now what do we understand by the principle of obedience? Many would say that it is keeping the law; that is not the way in which St. Paul uses it, because in this very epistle (ch. xvi. 26) he talks about “the obedience of faith,” and his idea of obedience is first to take the provision as completely, as rapidly, and as perfectly as you can. It may be done instantaneously—you can take it now while the minister is speaking, it is the possession that you ought to take, and that you were born to take, namely, of submission to God; you bow your heart and say—Thine for ever, O God, that is my birthright, that is the purpose of my existence, that is my duty, my joy, and the law of my life.

The first thought is to be (while I am speaking, if you have never done it before) to say, I am Thine, O God. Then there comes in another thought—Why you are His? First, by creation; secondly, by the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ; thirdly, by the claim of the Holy Ghost. Now, it is that claim of the Holy Ghost, which is what we, for the most part, seem so little to apprehend. We understand our ruin in the first

Adam ; we understand our redemption in the second Adam ; but we do not seem to see, I am afraid, as we ought, what is meant by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, that He not only gives us an instinct or principle called life, but that He enters into us and claims us to use us and bless us. And how ? By the principle of obedience. Now that principle of obedience, when it is exercised through faith, means, as he says in this same epistle, “submitting ourselves unto the righteousness of God” (ch. x. 3). It means bowing down to God’s righteousness when we have none of our own, and saying, Thank God ! the righteousness of God is mine, for “God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin : that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Then I take it as a gift—I take it as a possession—I take it as a life-power—I take it as a claim. But that “obedience (of faith) unto righteousness,” IS NOT ALL. There comes in us, as the Apostle puts it in verse 19, an obedience of “righteousness unto holiness.” And what is that ? Righteousness is the standing ; but it also becomes the power of the new life, and that power of the new life begins to work, and what does it do as it works within ? You are servants to obedience, when you take God’s Word, but when you take “the obedience unto righteousness” you become servants to righteousness. What for ? To live the perfect, upright life of rectitude in everything according to God’s perfect righteousness. And that is “Righteousness unto

Holiness. The word "holiness" (*Gr. ἁγιασμός*) occurs twice in this passage, ten times altogether, nine times in St. Paul's Epistles, and once in St. Peter's. In all cases it means "sanctification," perhaps we may say, as distinguished from our idea of "holiness," though it is translated five times "holiness" and five times "sanctification." But when we speak of sanctification, we mean the process; and by holiness, we mean the result and attainment. In 2 Cor. vii. 1, there is also the word "holiness" (*Gr. ἁγιωσύνη*), and there is one other word in Heb. xii. 12 (*Gr. ἁγιότης*) translated "holiness," which is the abstract word, belonging to God only, and used nowhere else.

Now, the word which is twice used in the passage before us is, as I have said, the process by which we are to be made—What? *Holy, holy, holy*. Has it ever occurred to you that while the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man gives Himself but one distinction under the title of "I am" as an adjective, viz.: "I am meek and lowly in heart," God apparently, as far as I can see, gives only one title for Himself as an adjective, and it is, "I am holy." We read, in other places of course, descriptions of the Lord God as "merciful and gracious," &c., but I am not aware that you have for Jesus Christ any other personal designation than "I am meek and lowly," or for God any other than "I am holy."

Now, what does this mean? It means more than tongue can tell, but I think our instinct tells us it means that God is a Being who abhors what

is evil, what is not according to His own perfect, spiritual, and natural characteristics. It means that, while He abhors that which is evil, He loves and cleaves to that which is good—inherently good. It means that it would be impossible for the Holy One to think, speak, act, or even “to behold iniquity”; it means, moreover, that His standard being perfect, He carries it out to its ultimate end in everything, and so God Almighty says to the creature, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” And in Lev. xx. 7, we read: “Be ye holy,” and in verse 24, “I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.” Our sanctification means this—a process that begins and works on and on and on until we come in our poor measure as limited creatures, of course, to be like God Himself, and this is what St. Paul means when he says, “Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”

And how shall this be? First, avoid all that is evil. Again and again ministers are asked by friends, at least I judge so from what happens to myself—why is it that I cannot enjoy spiritual things more? And I take you to the very threshold of the subject and ask you—Have you put away every known evil from your heart, from your home, from your business, from your dealings with others? If not, it is utterly vain and futile to expect to live free from bondage to evil; you must begin by putting away every filthy thing. Mark from God’s Word how you find that, whenever there was a reformation, the work was begun

by putting away the accursed thing : for example, Joshua in the matter of Achan, David, and Hezekiah, when they had sinned and asked the Lord to have mercy. All through the Scriptures there is one prelude to blessing—*Get rid of the accursed thing*, by every power that God has bestowed upon you. The first thing is—to be set apart *from* ; then, secondly, to be set apart *to*, that is, given over to God. Oh ! it will cost us something if our text has any power when we read these words : “ Servants to God.” It means that we are given over, cost what it may, to the service of the Lord ; and it means seeking in every way to gain, by learning, by prayer, by all the aids that God has given us, to “ know Him the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent,” which is “ life eternal.” It will mean submitting our own wills to the Holy Ghost’s will, “ yielding ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Many people say,—Why should not I enjoy my life ? Why should not I do this or that ? Because your members are yielded, if you are a Christian, to God, and God must have them all, and you dare not keep back the very tissue with which the end of your finger is clothed, for it is God’s property, and how dare you trifle ? How dare you use your eyes, your ears, your tongue, or your body for the world, when they all belong to the Lord God Almighty ?

That is what God asks, and that is holiness,

the process of sanctification, as we call it ; progressive, yes, progressive, because more and more and more we grow into " Christ's image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, from glory to glory."

And then comes the last thought of my text, and all that we dare to dwell upon. What does it lead to? Obedience leads to righteousness, and righteousness to holiness, and holiness to God, and God leads to fruit ; and the fruit shall be in all its beauty "*Everlasting Life*" in all its power and fruition.

This is my text, this is what we are called to see, this is my invitation to myself and to my people, that we should learn, attend, and put into practice—that God has "called us out of darkness into His marvellous light," that we may know the bliss of the creature, and that bliss is not to be set free from Control. Look at a planet—let it go loose from its proper orbit, is that bliss for anything? Take the prodigal, who got himself free from his father, was that bliss? Poor fool! "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." But go back to the Father, and as you bow your heads, and kneel before Him with that text in front of you (as I trust you will each of you do to-night) say—Oh! Lord, a "servant of sin," I have no fruit but husks, the fruit of freewill, which may look well for a time; but how soon it withers and comes to nothing. But *now, now, now*, I yield myself unto Thee as one "alive from the dead," I ask Thee to take my "members as

instruments of righteousness," I offer my "reasonable service" which is my body, soul, and spirit, to be inhabited by the Holy Ghost, and from my soul I say with full intention—"Thine for ever, God of love, here, and in eternity." The life of a wholly yielded heart is a life of liberty. As a child with his father, as a planet in its orbit, as the slave, by freewill, of God, which is glorious manhood—to this life I invoke you all, through Jesus Christ our perfect Saviour. AMEN.

1897.

A W A K E !

HE saith :

“Awake . . .

“Arise from the dead.”—EPH. v. 14.

“Arise { Shine.
And be doing.—Is. lx. 1 ; 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

“Arise, let us go hence.—Jo. xiv. 31.

“Why do we sit still?”—JER. viii. 14.

A W A K E !

IT is not to be expected that, with the brief, momentary consideration which alone the congregation can yet have given to the Motto Text for the year, they can already, in any sense, have grasped the deep force of the meaning and teaching which their minister would have it convey to their souls. It has cost him long consideration and prayer; it is the outcome of many attempts and failures to find certain passages of God's Holy Word which should be applicable to the condition of every class of reader, and which should furnish words of exhortation and instruction, and also of comfort, to all those who shall consider them during the coming twelve months. It is intended, moreover, that the Motto Text should act as spiritual food for all the faithful servants of the Lord, and, therefore, it becomes the minister's duty to discover certain passages of God's Word containing deeper spiritual truth within them than may at first sight appear to the casual reader,

It is not intended to be only one out of the many single texts which are offered us in the present day, which, though deeply weighted and solemn, may contain no further instruction on a card than they do in the Book; it is intended to be a compilation of texts which shall set the thoughtless thinking, and in which the thinking shall find comfort and power. In the present day, and for some years past, I may say, we have almost been overwhelmed with the multitude of texts which are offered to us, and which, after the first glance, afford us no further light or power to our souls than any other particular texts; whereas a Motto Text, if I understand it rightly, should be a word that exactly suits the need of every observer, and if, therefore (as I earnestly entreat of my congregation), our Motto Card be exhibited prominently in our homes, it is meant, by your minister at least, to convey certain instruction to every possible class of reader. You can therefore well understand the difficulty that he feels in finding suitable words from year to year, whereby to meet the needs of the sinner, however sad and terrible his condition, and the desires of the saint, however far he may be advanced in spiritual matters. It is not easy from year to year to find such words as shall exactly suit all conditions of men; and our national habits have so completely altered during the last twenty years, that my Motto Text is no longer a novelty, and it is in danger of being classed among those "pretty Christmas cards," and "nice words" which we

send one to another, and which are, for the most part, thrown aside as soon as they have been looked at; whereas, I humbly hope that the members of this congregation will treasure the card offered to them by their servant, the minister, and make it a matter of spiritual improvement, of frequent consideration; that so, by the grace of God, it may be a word which will act as a constant reproach to both minister and people, if "our hearts are not right with God," as well as a message to all visitors who enter our houses.

This then being the vast intention of my Motto Card, I ask you to bear with me while I attempt, however feebly, to set forth some of the many lines of thought that seem to me to be embodied in the combination of texts that I have set before you; though I can hardly do more than simply throw out suggestions, or heads of thought, which I trust will profitably be considered afterwards by my people.

In the very forefront there stand the words, "*He saith.*" Who? You would answer at once—God, of course. It is not so clear, my friends, when you look at the passage, Ephes. v. 14. In the margin, for instance, it is given—It saith; and in Greek the original for these two words is simply λέγει; and it is of purpose, I believe, by the Apostle left indefinite, for it is a matter of certain fact that in the whole of the Old Testament, no such text as this occurs; you cannot find the words "Awake, thou that sleepest, and

arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"; or as the original really is, and the Revised Version renders it: καὶ ἐπιφάυσει σοι ὁ Χριστός "Christ shall shine upon thee."

You are driven, therefore, as the learned commentators have been, to a large diversity of opinion as to the source of this utterance; and while one would say, and I humbly think rightly, that it is intended to be a kind of compilation or great summary of all the truths that are to be found in God's Word; others state that it is taken from some early Christian hymn, compiled by the Apostles themselves, and which contain these words; others again have said—and God forgive them for saying it (for in some ways they stand among the learned and spiritual)—that they are taken from an Apocryphal book, and quoted by St. Paul, *through mistake*. This is said by the learned German Dr. Meyer—That the words are quoted by mistake on St. Paul's part for Scripture! I trust that there is not one in this church who would dare to say that. The words are, if we understand them rightly, the combination or condensation of the Divine Truth which is brought before us through the length and breadth of the Old Testament. There are kindred thoughts in Is. ix. 2; xxvi. 19; lx. 1 and 2 (the latter verses form the second branch of our series of texts this morning), "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined,"

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His Glory shall be seen upon thee.” Though the words in Is. ix. 2, and xxvi. 19, are like the words of our first text, they are not the same, and we are driven, therefore, I think, to the conclusion that it is—*It saith*, that is, the whole Scripture saith, or God saith, who is the Author of Scripture; and we have before us the condensation of the revelation of God, addressed to a poor, sin-stricken, worthless race of human beings, whether in this or that particular medium or voice. Clearly, St. Paul means it for “the voice of God, and not man,” and therefore to be heeded by all who would desire His favour. And what we may safely gather from the indefiniteness or uncertainty as to the source of the quotation is, that this is the general force, or bearing, of God’s utterances to man: “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

And what is it then that we shall find in these words of the text which God is everywhere saying to man: “Awake thou that sleepest and arise.” Here, again, we are met by a strange and striking fact, that in the first of our texts

(Ephes. v. 14) there are the two words "Awake," and "Arise," whereas in the other verses, there is only the word "Arise"; but the word here translated "Awake" is the common word for "Arise" (Gr. *ἐγείραι*) while the word translated "Arise" is literally "Stand up" (Gr. *ἀνάστα*); "Stand up upon thy feet"; and to awake, therefore, is really another word for arise, but it is addressed definitely to those that are asleep, and, therefore, the first step towards arising must be awakening; so it is rightly and properly given to us by our translators, repeated by the Revised Version as in the Authorised, "Awake and Arise thou that sleepest."

Now we have in this striking quotation not an *isolated* utterance in God's Holy Word, but one that is repeated more than one hundred times in books of the Old and New Testaments. We actually find the solemn command from God to man to Arise, more than one hundred times, and it may well be asked—Why then has the minister, as with a captious, personal idea, chosen certain specific instances, whereof to speak to his people, instead of taking the whole of them? Because I humbly believe that in these four we have a condensation or summary of the whole, and if every case of the hundred be carefully and prayerfully considered by my people, they will find in all of them that there is the same great idea as will be brought out in these four particular instances, to which I more especially call your attention,

It is the one great cry of the Scriptures, "Awake and Arise," and woe to the man that dares to neglect it, and refuses to hear that solemn appeal of God to the soul. "Why do we sit still," or, as it were, hinder the work of the Holy Ghost by not calling on others to hear that word for themselves? "Why do we sit still" when God's voice in every part of the world and in every part of His revelation is sounding forth the wondrous cry, "Awake and Arise."

And what is the condition of those who are here peculiarly addressed? It is said: "Awake, thou that sleepest;" and it may possibly be asked by some among my hearers—Then how can the words be applicable to us, for God knows, that in His gracious providence we were awakened long since, and have been watching and waiting for the coming of this Lord for years? But pause one moment, and let it be the voice of God at the opening of the year to you—that possibly you, too, may be found among the slumberers, and may need the solemn word of exhortation to yourselves. Look first at those who are utterly without Christ, and of whom we are bound to say, that they are "in darkness and the shadow of death," that they have no life in their souls, that they are, as St. Paul describes them, "dead in trespasses and sins"; and can it be said that *they* are otherwise than sleeping? You remember, how in Ps. xiii., 3, the wise man says: "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." Remember that again

and again we are taught to think of men in their trespasses and sins as so heavily asleep, like the drunkard, that nothing but the call of God can awaken them.

And if it be true of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," that they need to be awakened and called out of their sleep by God, are we not justified in saying that there are many who must be described as sleepy Christians? Yes, it is a painful fact that the Lord Jesus Christ who reads the inner thoughts of man tells us that the wise virgins even, "all slumbered and slept"; and surely the foolish we should *expect* to be found giving way to the natural instincts of the heart, and sleeping when they ought to be awake. When is it that the tares are sown? "*While men slept.*" When is it that the thief comes in, and takes what he will from the house? When men *do not watch, but sleep*. And what is it that is always descriptive of the great mass of mankind? That, when they ought to be up and doing, they are slothful and sleeping, because they do not listen to the voice of the Lord. The voice comes that awakens the dead, and they that hear the voice of the Son of God shall live; and the voice comes to the Church, and I dare to say, that too often the Church is more heavily asleep or less able to catch the tones of the Master's voice than even the "dead in trespasses and sins." Is it not a fact that the Gospel may have omnipotent power with a careless and godless man, while it seems to pass right over the Church

too often, and people just go fast asleep while the word of truth is preached to them, so that it is like the sound of the voice spoken of in Ezek. xxxiii. 32, "They hear Thy words as a lovely song, but they do them not," and it simply soothes and lulls them more and more to sleep. "I sleep, but my heart waketh," says the Bride; not a very pleasant or profitable position, apparently, when we remember that, because of that sleep, though she loved her Lord well, she was utterly unable to hear Him knocking at the door, and only woke up when He had gone, to find out her sad, disconsolate position; and I sadly fear that there are many Christians in a congregation who have to wake to bitter pain and sorrow, because their Lord has gone. He has spoken, He has called to them with words of tender love: Wake up, my beloved, "open to Me," and too late, too late, there comes the awakening to find that their Beloved has gone and they have lost their fellowship with Him because the soul was not upon its watch tower. Most assuredly do we all need, and at all points of our lives, the warning cry of the Great High God; and so I do not believe that there is one who will ever look on our Motto Card this year to whom the word of exhortation from God Himself will not fitly apply; "Awake, thou that sleepest."

And now—What saith He, when He wakes us? He says: "Arise from among the dead." He says, "Arise, shine." He says, "Arise, and be doing." He says, "Arise, let us go hence." And

here again we meet with a strange anomaly, or one of those paradoxes that are found in God's Word,—That man is apparently charged to do what he can never do for himself. Not one can awaken himself; not one can arise in any strength of his own. Yet the command is solemn, and clear, and ringing like an alarm bell through the whole of Scripture. Who can do it? Not one; neither sinner nor saint can do it of himself. But here is the marvel, when God speaks, He does it with power; so when the Word becomes effective, it is in the power of the dead to hear; of the sleeping one to listen; of the slumbering one to arise. And this is why I ask that our text be exposed to view, because it is the very Word of the Living God Himself: "Awake and Arise." And it carries weight, because it is of God, and it is God speaking and "*He saith.*" Then let Him speak. "He will," as Meyer says, "by the gracious operation of His Word and Spirit annul in thee the ethical darkness. Observe that the 'arising' is not an act of one's own, independent of God and anticipating His gracious operation; but that it takes place just through God's effectual awakening call, and on this effectual calling ensues the Christian enlightening."

But woe! woe! to that man to whom Almighty God speaks, and he refuses to hear, and lulls his soul to sleep again, saying—It is too early, you have waked me too soon, give me a little more time for slumber. Not so, my brethren, for God's Word is this: "To-day, if

ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

To what, then, are the voices of God summoning us, as set forth in the words of our Motto texts? Many, many are the verses which might have been chosen, and I would earnestly invite you to search for, and consider them. But for the practical power of the Gospel call, I believe that ~~these~~ four are sufficient, and that they present to us a full picture of our privileges and possibilities, as offered to us of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. They are each one full of force, each one of different value, and each one coming to us in possibly quite different circumstances of our lives.

I.—“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” ~~And here~~ we have the exhortation of God that gives life to those that are dead. Too long ~~(it may be that there are some in this Church),~~ their souls have lain dead, completely dead, like those dry bones in the valley of vision which Ezekiel beheld, and “there were very many.” But the prophet is not able to grasp the omnipotence of God. “Can these bones live?” We put the words in our lips, though God is really asking it of us, and we ought to be able to say: “Oh! Lord God, Thou knowest;” and we ought to have the power of prophesying upon the dry bones: “Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live;” and they shall arise from their sleep of death, “and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”

It is this that we look for, it is this that my

Motto is intended to bring about by the grace of God; it is for this that I have chosen it, to be a word speaking to the dead in every house where it stands. Wake from among the dead, and stand upon thy feet, O dead man! and he shall do it because God speaks to him. This is the first of all the exhortations. It may be that he who is dead may stand up to-day in this church, and as he stands among the dead, he has a voice, and that voice shall be heard in your houses, too, as you observe him coming and going, and you shall marvel that he who went into church at 11 o'clock, dead, comes back "Alive unto God for evermore." And it shall be seen even by those who are dead, and whose eyes are closed with the sleep of death—it shall be known even by those who have no spiritual knowledge, that something has been given to the soul of anyone who hears the call, and that he who "was dead is alive again."

But it is not only "Awake thou that sleepest," it is further "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise out (Gr. ἐκ) from among the dead." Come out from among them, for thou hast no place nor companionship there. The very moment that the Lord Jesus spoke that word of power to the man who had his dwelling among the tombs (St. Mark v. 19) and cast out the devil, that moment the man begins to feel that he must go where Jesus goes; and though Jesus did not permit that then, he never sent him back to the tombs, but He said: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee,

and hath had compassion on thee," and the man goes out as a witness. So also the dead who live become not only "alive unto God for evermore," but they go out from the tombs to live in the house, in the circle round about them, as "preachers of righteousness," to declare what God has done for their deliverance and joy.

You that were dead even in the early morning of to-day, but who are now feeling the pulsations of life in your souls, and you, that have been Christians, it may be for years, but have been dwelling among the tombs, and cleaving to the dead things, ought to "come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." I believe that many of you know in your hearts, this morning, some unclean thing to which you are sticking and cleaving, as being your joy. I verily believe that there are some who keep up some vile idol worship in the soul; and it must go, if we are to live unto God; it must be done with, we must come out from it, be separate from it, and touch it not, if we would have the blessing of God, and be witnesses to His glory.

Yes! when the word of God comes to your soul: "Arise from the dead," then step out in the strength of God. And then shall come the result: "Christ shall give thee light." Christ shall shine upon thee, and thou shalt be all light: "In Him is no darkness at all," He is altogether light, He is "the light of the world." And as we step out by the strength of the Holy Ghost from

the tombs into the life power, and into the presence of the Christ, His glory shines upon us, and as it shines, all is light wherever it can come, and it is only the evil of fleshliness that keeps it back from any part of us.

Now I must ask you to notice the voices of God as He speaks to us in these words. The first says—"Awake! come out." The second is—"Arise, shine." Why? "For thy light is come." Whence? Christ has come to thee, and given thee light.

II.—~~And so~~ the second text springs from the first, of which it is perhaps the practical embodiment: "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," and thou must shine now, through no power of thine own; thou canst not help it.

Now this is the voice of ~~the~~ Lord Jehovah. The other was the voice of God, who made, who commands the world, and who says to the dead matter—Live, and it liveth. But this is the voice of the Covenant Jehovah, who speaks to His people who belong to Him, and whom He wishes to be His reflectors upon the earth. You never heard of the luminaries of heaven fretting because they are commanded to shine. They shine, because God's light is upon them, they cannot but do what their Maker requires. And so when thy Maker calleth upon thee to "Arise, shine," remember that thou art to be like the moon, to which the Bride is compared in the Song of Solomon, which goes forth shining with the reflected

light of the sun; And it is no burdensome duty to be called to shine; you are not called to make *yourself* shine, but only to listen to the voice that bids you—Come out from among the dead, and then—this is the critical point of all—then, you will not need to make yourself shine, for it is: “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” It is a pitiful folly for a man to keep back his shining power, because he will stick to the things of the tomb. How many of you know it to your cost! I have been among you twenty years, and watched the careers of many. They have *gone back, back* to make my heart ache: “They did run well, who did hinder them?” But oh! God be merciful, and think, I beseech you, what it means to have set the face downwards instead of upwards! Eyes up, man, eyes up, and they will soon reflect the light of God; and you will not need to be told to shine, because you cannot help it: “We all, with open face beholding, or reflecting, as in a glass the glory of the Lord.” . . . Why? Because “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, *to give* the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”; and so He the Lord says: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”

III.—Then, once again, ~~what next~~ are we charged to ~~do~~ “Arise, and be doing.” And it is not now so much the voice of the Creator, or of

Jehovah the Lord, as the voice of the King, and He speaks to His Son, who is also His subject, and He says: "Arise, and be doing," "Arise, and build," as we read in 1 Chron. xxii. 19. This is the voice that bids us be doing. Why? Because our "light is come": "*Let your light so shine; that they may see your good works.*" We cannot but be doing, when the light is upon us, and in us. And what shall we do? We shall do what David did when he had provided all the materials for the building, when everything was ready for his son—the architectural plans, and the gold, the silver, and brass, and stone—he simply said to him "Arise and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built in the name of the Lord." "And the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent."

And so you and I are called in the strength of the Lord God to "Arise," and as the Prophet Isaiah says: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;" and as we put on our strength, and "shake ourselves from the dust," we go forth in the strength of the Lord to do His bidding, and to build the temple of the Lord.

The Lord Christ awaits to see His house completed, and I have but one charge committed to myself and my people, in this world, and that is to "Arise and build." St. Paul would speak of himself in writing to the Corinthians "as a wise master-builder"; and I would ask for nothing

more than to be a wise master-builder, and entreat you that you would join me as wise master-builders and co-workers in building up the temple, which is the body of Christ, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He yearns to see completed.

IV.—Then comes the fourth voice, and it is no longer the voice of the great God, or the voice of the Covenant Jehovah, or the voice of the King, but it comes to us as from the tender Friend, Who speaks from the humble supper room, where He deigns to hold fellowship with His own; and as He speaks to His little chosen band—the traitor Judas being gone, for He never says this to the traitor; He never says this to the outside world—it is to His own beloved ones that He says: “Arise, let us go hence.”

And He calls us now to the “fellowship of His sufferings,” that we may be made conformable unto His death. That we may share His glory. And how? Because the power is given, and it is the power of His resurrection; and in the power of His resurrection He invites us to go forth, from the supper room to Gethsemane, and from Gethsemane to Calvary, and from thence to know the blessedness of Ascension, and so He says—Take it as your joy and comfort that you never have to go alone.

“Arise, *let us* go hence;” and as I heard M. Monod say last year at Keswick, mourning as he was the death of his wife, which had taken place only a fortnight before: “As the gates seem to

open, and the Master's voice is heard saying—
Arise, come away, it is never going alone, or to be
alone, but it is 'Let *us* go hence.'

— And when you come to the passage from here to glory, Jesus Christ your Lord will be there, you will never step into the darkness of Gethsemane or Calvary alone, or know what it is to be alone as Jesus Christ knew it, when "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." No! Come what will, the blessed Jesus will be there, if we love Him, and as we feel afraid to look at the darkness, it will be "Arise, let *us* go hence," and Jesus will do all the holding and upholding, and we shall simply do the following and be filled with joy.

What, then, are the general lessons of this fourfold "Arise"? What, but that—

- (1.) We must separate ourselves from all that is of death.
- (2.) We must give to the Lord the honour due unto His Name.
- (3.) We must be at work as missionaries for the building of the Temple.
- (4.) We must go to the Father as gladly as Jesus did, if possible.

And all is done (1) *upon*, then (2) *through*, then (3) *by*, and at last (4) in fellowship *with*, us, by virtue of the Divine power of the Lord.

Do you see the progressive thought of the whole? It begins in the pit, it ends with the palace; it begins with hell, it ends with heaven; it begins with the grave, it ends with God; it

begins with the house of the dead, it ends with the mansions of the Father; it begins with desolation, it ends with illumination and joy, and glory, and conformity to Christ's image.

And so I ask you now: "Why, why do we sit still" when He calls us to such ineffable glory, to the "fellowship of His sufferings," and to participation in His honours? This whole passage of Jeremiah tells of the overthrow of all that is human, light, glory, house, and home. Hence it is madness to sit still in the midst of what is going to ruin. Take the gift of Life to-day. Take the gift of Light, that you may shine as your Lord. Take the power and strength given by God for service to come, and seek for souls from God to hasten the finishing of His House. And then listen to the Voice of your Master, as He touches your elbow, or puts His arm round you in His love and says: My child, "Arise, let *us* go hence," and He shall take you all the way (through trial, temptation, pain and suffering, it may be), until you stand before God in heaven perfected, even as your Lord is perfected, and "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

1898.

LIVING WATER.

Ps. lxxv. 9.—The River of God is full of water.

Jno. iv. 15.—Sir, give me this water.

Cant. v. 1.—Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

LIVING WATER.

THE special characteristic of a Motto Text, as I have for some years past at least understood it to be, is that it must present a word of peculiar force to every single person who shall read it; in the humble judgment of the Preacher, it is one of the most sacred things that he can be called upon to produce, for as “a scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven,” and “an Householder who is to bring forth out of his treasure things new and old,” he is year by year to make such a combination of God’s truth as shall meet (1) the most casual observer with the full gospel of salvation; and (2) meet the earnest soul that is longing for light, and life, and peace, with a word of comfort from the riches of God’s grace; and (3) meet the deep and thoughtful student of God’s Word with something that shall satisfy his soul for ever. It should be God’s Word suited to every possible case, offering food for at least twelve months’ meditation and prayer.

And whatever the success or failure with regard

to my past efforts in this matter, I cannot but believe that, by the mercy of God, I have succeeded this morning in placing before you a word that shall fulfil every one of these conditions. You can hardly tell what an amount of study and thought is involved in the selection, throughout the whole of God's Book, of a Motto Text, with the right and fitting words that shall touch my people's souls—and the constant rejection of many, till at last it seems that a word has been found, by the goodness of God, that may be a blessing to all; and so, pointing now to this card, of which I ask every person in the Church to accept a copy, and which I trust may be exhibited openly in your homes to the eyes of your friends, can you doubt that the most careless and thoughtless reader of these words will be struck with the thought that with God there is an abundance of that which all men need and desire—that it is man's place to claim it by humble petition or prayer, and that the gracious Lord only waits to be asked, and will give from His abundance as much as ever we will take.

And should there be one beholding my text in deep anxiety and pain of spirit (and have we not more than one such with us this morning?), could you say that there could be found in this Book anything more qualified to satisfy the yearnings of that anxious soul, and to tell it that though it has sinned against Almighty God, that though it has deserved nothing but tribulation and anguish, yet the God of all goodness, grace, and love, has a

river full of His mercy, of His power, of His love, and of His life, and that the most anxious and most depressed one has nothing to do but to stoop and drink, and it shall find that it is satisfied abundantly and for ever ?

Or again, should there be one of the Lord's most advanced servants in the Divine Life, one who has studied most deeply God's riches and treasures, can you doubt for a moment that to such a one there will not be in the triplet we have chosen for our own Motto Text all that the most advanced soul can desire, namely, the revelation of the abundance of God which He has to give, with the only condition attached for our enjoyment of that abundance, that we have a capacity and a will to receive at His hands. It speaks to us of *Divine* supply, everlasting and unbounded ; and *human* privilege, measured only by *faith*, and *desire*, and *capacity*.

Take then, my beloved flock, this Motto Text for 1898 from your Minister, and may God grant that it may speak to every heart in your homes, and to all who shall visit you day by day, as a direct and life-giving message from the Lord.

And now let us endeavour to look somewhat below the surface of our Text, and I think we shall see how much there may be for after study in these words, and how remarkably they meet all the possible desires and hopes of the whole human race. (I) I need hardly say, with regard to the words "river" and "water," that, instinctively, they impress the ear and the eye with the

idea of Life. It seems that the word "water," taken in its broadest sense, is the very equivalent and medium of Life. When we speak of water, there is something so restful, so comforting, so helpful, that everyone, I believe, on earth would say that water is the most precious thing human beings possess. No land has ever been known to prosper without water; no land has ever become rich without water; no people can become great or powerful that cannot bear upon the bosoms of their rivers the fleets that bring riches from other lands, or take forth their own wealth to the foreigner. All depends on the rivers to make the country rich, blessed, bountiful, and beautiful.

But when we speak of water in its very broadest sense, we apply many different significations to it. For water to fall from the heavens as rain brings to our minds the idea of "the parched ground becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water," and we realize that God has enriched the land when He pours His bounties upon it in "the early and the latter rain." But when we speak of a well or spring, then immediately there comes the still further idea of calm, quiet, still, personal comfort in the taking of that wondrous supply, and of inexpressible gratitude that such provision should be made for our needs. But when we turn to think of a river, there is something altogether different from the rain and the spring, for here we think according to the words of Scripture in

Ps. xxxvi. 8, of the abundant supply of pleasure : “Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures” ; or again, we think of the enrichment of the whole earth, as in Ps. lxxv. 9 : “Thou visitest the earth and waterest it ; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God ;” or we go a step further, in Is. lxxvi. 12, and we read “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream ;” and so the idea comes at once as we ponder the river, of there being pleasure and plenty, and peace and power ; and of life more abundant by the river (Ezek. xlvii. 9) as we take from its riches what God has provided.

But then, as we turn from the general idea of water to speak (II) more particularly of “the River of God,” we know immediately, by instinct, I suppose, that it symbolizes that Life which flows direct from God Himself to His creatures, and that in the deeper and more spiritual sense (in which of course we would apply it) it means that spiritual life offered in, and through, the Holy Ghost ; “the gift of God” as Jesus Christ tells us, even His own Life. The Master sits by the well of Samaria, and He offers to the woman who comes to draw to slake her natural thirst and to perform the duties of her natural life—“living water :” “If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink : Thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water,” and that “living water” would be “a well of water springing up

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into everlasting life." And here He presents to her the idea of *personal* satisfaction. But passing on to St. John vii. 38: when on the last great day of the feast, He speaks more widely concerning the *world*, not only does He say that any man who believes in him shall not thirst any more, but that while he drinks of God's supply, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"; by which He distinctly implies that the man who has taken fully of what God can give, will find that "the River of God," is not only sufficient to satisfy every instinct of his own soul, but will make him the medium of passing life-power to others until it spreads throughout the length and breadth of the world. "This spake He of the Spirit," (v. 39), so that on our Lord's own authority we may safely say that the "Water of Life" or "Living Water" is the Holy Ghost, and "the River of God" in its true and spiritual signification, of course means the everflowing and abundant supply of God's Spirit as given for Life, Peace, Riches, and Pleasure, to all who will accept the graciously proffered gift.

But the expression becomes far more full and instructive if we proceed to look through the Scriptures as a whole, and see how this beautiful figure pervades the Divine Revelation, and embraces in itself almost every possible conception of blessing, for the individual soul and for the world at large, and if we try and discover in what progressively different ways "the River of God" is placed before us.

There are four at least, perhaps some would say five, visions given us, and very beautiful representations and descriptions they are of "the River of God," each of which is distinctly an advance upon the other; each of which gives us a different view; while the whole combined gives a deeply interesting and helpful picture of what the River is, and what it does for all the places which are watered by its streams; and presenting to my mind one of the most magnificent pictures that one can ask for, of the abundance of supply for the life of the soul in Christ Jesus by the power of the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

We commence at the very earliest stages of creation. In the 2nd of Genesis we read that as soon as God had created man (male and female) He placed them in a garden called the Garden of Eden, and we are told that "a river went out of Eden to water the Garden" (see Gen. ii. 8, 10.) Now this is in the days of man's innocence and simplicity, and whatever the word Eden may mean in the original, which is still disputed by the learned, there is little doubt but that it has the signification of "pleasure," and therefore we gather the thought that there was the source of all true pleasure. This river of God is to water the Garden, and then to flow forth therefrom into the four quarters of the earth. It is in direct connection with the "Tree of Life," and the "Tree of Knowledge of good and evil," and might almost be said to give to them their vitality and force, as to all else in that Garden of Eden.

Thus in the days of human innocence and direct dependence on God, "the River of God," *i.e.*, the supply of the Holy Ghost (so far as typified by the river in the garden), would seem to be directly instrumental in ministering to the comfort and pleasure of man by the production of fruit, &c., and then in dispensing life-power to the uttermost parts of the earth, for it went forth north, south, east, and west to supply the thirsty earth with all that it could require to make it rich and fruitful for God and man.

That River was surely abundantly full of water, and as God's beloved, man and woman, had but to stoop and drink abundantly whensoever they thirsted, there would through it ever be glory to God and perfect satisfaction to man in that it brought him every blessing that his soul could desire, every wish being met by God's bounty. But alas! sin came down upon the human race and marred the blessed creation of God, and immediately the Garden of Eden was lost, and with it all knowledge to man even of its real locality; we know not to-day where to look for that garden or that fourfold river.

But when God proceeds to bring about the salvation of His ransomed, though sinful, people Israel, as soon as He has delivered them from Egypt by bringing them through the Red Sea and the wilderness, He takes them to the side of the Jordan, and there we have the second Revelation (if we are justified in taking it so) of "the River of God." It is not now a river

flowing through a garden, but a river that passes through the valley of humiliation to the Dead Sea waters, into which it empties itself apparently without result for the time. It runs through a valley so depressed that, as most of you are aware, in its course of about 60 miles of latitude and 4 or 5 of longitude from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea, its waters are 653 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea at the Lake, and 1316 feet below the level of the Mediterranean at the Dead Sea. And Israel, the beloved of God, has to pass through the valley of humiliation, Israel who is the type to us of the saved soul, but not of the satisfied soul, is brought to the side of that river. Now the sight must have been to the Israelites a marvellous one, for we may suppose that most of the two millions of people had never seen a river running naturally through the land except as little children. For 40 years "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ," and marvellous was the supply that God gave them in their wilderness life, but it was not the joy of the river; now they saw a River "which overflowed all his banks all the time of harvest," as a proof of the bountiful supply which God would give to them, and they saw that River in all its beauty, bringing to them a sense of rest and of blessing. The Redeemed of the Lord who, for their stubbornness and obstinacy, had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years without knowing the provision of "the land flowing with milk and honey," are called now to

the blessed, holy life where they will have such an overflowing plenty as to fill their very hearts with joy; they are to be introduced into a life of victory, possession, and rest, the three things specially promised in Canaan; and thus the flowing stream of Jordan in the valley of humiliation speaks to us of the present life and of the life more abundant, and we turn now to the words of our text: "The River of God is full of water," and out of the heart that yearns for blessing there bursts the cry from each new discoverer of this River: "Sir, give *me* this water," and the glorious Lord who has redeemed us to Himself says: "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," and we drink of the Jordan, and we pass into the land of victory, possession, and rest.

But not yet have we exhausted the wonders of "the River of God," for the River is not only for those who inhabit the garden, or for those who, having been redeemed, are still travellers to the Good Land. There is also a River, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High" (Ps. xlv. 4), a River for those who have come to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty, *i.e.*, for those who have found "a peaceable habitation, sure dwellings, and quiet resting-places," "for the ransomed of the Lord are to come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Is. xxxv. 10), and when they get there, they shall find that God has also a River for them—ever full and ever flowing; and once more it brings to

them, so long as they abide in the life of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, joy and gladness of heart. There is a River for *fruitfulness* in the garden life of Eden; a River for *abundance* of blessing for those who pass from the wilderness to enter the life of possession and victory, and a River for *gladness* to all who dwell in the city of our God. And once again "The River of God is full of water," and if we have tasted of this life of holy fellowship with God, the thirsty soul bows down and says: Oh! my Lord, "give me this water," and back there comes the blessed voice from the Shekinah: "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," and the soul of the thankful one enters into gladness, and is filled with joy in the presence of the Lord.

But once more the vision is opened, and we are called to gaze upon another scene. It is not now a city, or valley, or garden, but it is the very Temple of the Holy One Himself, and in Ezek. xlvii. 1, we find that the man of God is taken within the sanctuary gates, and, as he gazes upon the mysteries of the Holy Place of the habitation of God, suddenly he sees waters issuing out from under the threshold of the house eastward, "at the south side of the altar." This is the sacrificial aspect of "the River of God," and as it starts from that wondrous place of mercy, of grace, of holiness, it is an abundant supply, even in the commencement, for the waters we are told, "ran out"; and they ever deepen and broaden until, from a little stream that a man could place

himself in up to his ankles, they become "waters to swim in," and "go down into the desert." Now this sacrificial aspect of "the River of God" is also the Missionary aspect. In the three pictures that have preceded, we have had (1) the abundance of supply for man in his innocence and joy; (2) the abundance of supply for the nation in its redeemed state of transition; (3) the abundance of supply for the Church in its life of fellowship with God; but this River (4) is for the desolate places of the earth, and these waters go out until "it shall come to pass that everything that liveth—shall live," *i.e.*, that everything that lives shall have life more abundant, and everything that the waters *can* affect for good shall live. Read carefully that 9th verse, and you will see that, while the living live more abundantly, the dead are caused to live where this river comes. It is the life power of God away there in the desert, and it bears upon its bosom all that is required to make "the wilderness rejoice, and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose." It is "the River of God" that gives joy to the earth, and none but the marshy places (see v. 11) shall be able to resist the omnipotence of this River. The garden, the valley, the city, are all places in which the *people of God* are to be individually supplied; but here the idea is of life for the dead as well as life more abundant for the living; and as the multitudes in the desert have the glorious river flowing by them, they have no need ever to say, "Sir,

give me drink,"—they have but to receive of the all-abundant supply: for "He laveth the thirsty land," and as the River reaches each helpless one He cries: "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Only once more, and the vision may close. Our thoughts are called away to the New Creation, far away beyond the present existence of pain, sorrow, grief, and sin. Our hearts are lifted up to that time when the Apostle says: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away," and the voice of the Lord was heard saying: "Behold, I make all things new." "And he showed me a pure River of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And what see we now, my friends? It is "the River of God" for the New Creation. There shall be no more sin, no more death, no more tears, no more sorrow, no more shame, but the nations of the whole earth, all the body of the Lord's redeemed, are now to take their place by the side of this wondrous River which supplies every possible wish, desire, hope, and intention of those who are already perfected in glory. It is an abundant River which meets the wants of the whole earth; incalculable millions of the Lord's saved ones shall be satisfied abundantly with the River of His pleasure, with the River of His power, and the River of His joy.

What a marvellous progression there is in this wonderful "River of God," as we follow it through

His Word! In the garden it simply satisfied one man and one woman—we come to the “River of God” in glory, and it satisfies all the innumerable multitudes of the heavenly hosts. We see the River in the garden which just produces fruit for one man (male and female);—we see “the River of God” in glory, and “in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” See the abundance of the Tree of Life; in the garden of Eden there was just the one Tree of Life; in the heavenly Home there is the Tree of Life everywhere; in the garden of Eden there was just one man satisfied; in the heavenly Home there is the satisfaction of all.

But see how we have progressed; we have passed from the River that sprang from Eden, the River of pleasure, innocent of course; from the River that brings us redemption in all its fulness, and life more abundant when we enter the Canaan existence; from the City where we get the sure dwelling or habitation, and find that “the River of God is full of water”; then we are taken into the temple of God, and from the Altar it is that there comes the Stream that floods the desert places of the earth, and makes them bear fruit to God’s glory; and we are at last carried up to the Throne, even to God Himself and the Lamb, from whom there comes forth this wondrous River that satisfies every possible desire of all the Redeemed.

I ask you to ponder the matter, to think how full for all is "the River of God." I have left out more than half that I hoped to say, I can only close now, for fear of wearying you, by asking—What shall we do in the face of this provision? Each heart that has any reality in it must say—Lord, it will cure me—"Give me this water," and to each one He is saying: "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," until at length, as we read in Is. lviii. 11, Your soul shall be "like a watered garden."

"Drink, yea, drink abundantly," until, as we read in Hosea ii. 15: Your soul shall be like a "valley of Achor for a door of hope," and there like Israel we may pass to the life more abundant.

"Drink, yea, drink," until as we read in St. Matt. v. 14: Your soul shall be like "a city set on an hill that cannot be hid." You shall bring glory to God, and blessing to man, by showing forth the Shekinah in your homes through the "fellowship you have with the Father and with his Son."

"Drink, yea, drink" until you yourself shall make "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose," (Is. xxxv. 1.) Remember, it is committed to us to carry the stream right away into the desert places, and to make them shout for joy.

"Drink, yea, drink abundantly," until, at length, you shall be yourself a very "temple of God" from which "He shall go no more out." As you abide in Him, so He abides in you, and you shall be one with God for ever and ever, through the

riches given in the River of God, the Holy Ghost, of whom Jesus says : “ I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever ”

1899.

GOLD.

Pure Gold, Refined Gold, Perfect Gold,

1 Chron. xxviii. 16, 17, 18 ; 2 Chron. iv. 21.

GOLD tried with Fire.

1 Peter i. 7.

VESSELS . . . meet for the MASTER'S USE.

2 Tim. ii. 20, 21

GOLD.

OUR Motto this year is “gathered out of” several “places of Scripture,” to use an expression from the Communion Service, but as in every single passage, the thought or idea is clearly one and the same, the preacher cannot be justifiably charged with having merely strung together a number of verses containing the word “gold.” I have carefully chosen these passages from every part of God’s Book, because in each place the writer is engaged with one particular subject, to which I wish to call your attention this morning, and to direct your thoughts throughout the year, namely:—the glory and the beauty which are required by the High God for all that is brought into His Holy Place and that is, for His service, placed before Him (Ex. xxviii. 2). Alike in the Old and the New Testament, under the Law and under the Gospel, the demand of God is exceeding clear and solemn, that that which is used for His service must be *of the best*.

But there is this tremendous distinction between the Law and the Gospel—that under the Law, the glory and the beauty were only found in the *inanimate* things of earth, which were set apart for the service of the Most High God of Israel. There was nothing in the creature, the *animate* creature, man, that could be acceptable to God, the Most High God in heaven; all the glory and the beauty were simply in the natural elements which God had created, and which come before our minds by the names of earthly materials, and which, therefore, were not corrupted by the sin of the creature, man; while under the New Testament dispensation, the externals are laid aside; for the Gospel is the great antitype of all the figures and shadows of the Law, and under this dispensation all the glory and the beauty are to be found in the *animate* creature, man; and notwithstanding the essential vileness and corruption of the old Adam, the glory and the beauty of the new nature which God bestows upon His servants cannot be corrupted or injured by sin; only let there be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and let Him be accepted as the Giver of a new nature and of a new life, and that new nature and that new life shall remain for ever pure, clean, refined, perfect, and when tried by fire shall be absolutely acceptable even to the Most High and Holy God Himself. For remember, that while the priests, and especially the High Priests, passed nearer and nearer into the presence of God, carrying

with them or making use of, certain vessels for God's service, they themselves were altogether corrupt in His sight; yet we, the blessed people of the Gospel, do not carry vessels as external to ourselves, for they have no real acceptance with God—but *we* are carried as vessels into the presence of and for the service of the Great High God Himself by the Lord Jesus Christ. So that there is this vast distinction, which must never be forgotten—the Law dealt only with shadows and figures, and while God gave glory and beauty, in some senses to the priests and to the High Priests through the appurtenances and adornments that they were permitted to carry, they had no real change by these externals; but we ourselves are to care little, if anything, for the external, provided only that the internal man, the vessel itself with its inner being, be purged and “meet for the Master's use,” and then we shall be ready to glorify God, and shall actually share His glory hereafter when we stand perfected before Him.

There are arguments used in our day, which I think no Christian man ought for one moment to give heed to. First it is said that that which is good under the Law, must necessarily be good under the Gospel; and that, therefore, as externals were ordained by God under the Law, it behoves Christians even to amplify these externals, because in this fuller dispensation they must be as needful and valuable as they were then. Surely, to all such arguments as this, it

might suffice to say, that the Law was but the shadow of the reality, and that when the reality comes, the shadow is put away. The figure is not the same as the real; and when the good thing is come, the figure or shadow must necessarily and inevitably pass away; and while for æsthetic enjoyment a man may indulge in externals in worship, common sense should teach us that they have no essential place before God, that the shadow is but the figure of the true, and that when we are given the true, we have done with the figure.

(2) On the other hand, there is another argument used, which is equally futile, namely, that because the Gospel is a fuller dispensation than that of the Law, and because God has made access to Himself so much easier through Jesus Christ, we, the recipients of His grace, His mercy, and His love, need not be so particular as regards the details of our service as the priests were required to be under the Old Testament dispensation of the Law. God help us if that is to become the accepted rule among Christians—and it is being widely taken up now. Does not our own sense of decency, to use a very strong word, I know, compel us to realize, that if under the dispensation of shadows and types God requires His servants to be exceeding careful; under the dispensation of perfection, He must require that His servants should be more thoughtful, more earnest; and if the priest, under the Law, was to abide almost perpetually in the

presence of the Most High in the course of his service, as the most sacred duty of his life, ought not the man who has been exalted into the privileges of the Gospel, for ever to be abiding in that Holy Presence, and engaged in the sacred service of His Lord? It would indeed be monstrous perversion of the truth to imagine that the Law could require more holiness than the Gospel; that the Law which was but a system of figures and types, demanded more of devotion, of service, of consecration than the Gospel which has brought us into the very presence of the Most High, in the person of Jesus Christ.

No! No! I pray you to realize at the outset of this year of grace, 1899, if you have never realized it before in your experience, that the Gospel claims of you absolute holiness; and that with nothing less will the great God be satisfied. Therefore, instead of depreciating the blessed calling of God, because we live under a system of grace, let us remember that we should exalt ourselves, lift ourselves up by the action of faith into the realization of God's own Being and character; and that, when we receive of Him what He will so generously give, we are meant to be "holy because He is holy, in all manner of conversation," (St. Peter i. 15), that is, in every detail of our existence.

We come then with the thought this day as we approach our Motto Text, that we are all called to be priests, kings and priests unto the Most High God; and I believe that we have been

specially called to accept this dignified title in order that we, as Christians, should apprehend that our service is never ceasing, because we abide for ever. Very different is our priesthood from the old priesthood in that! And further, being called to be priests under an infinitely nobler dispensation, our priesthood should be carried out in a more dignified character than the mere figures and shadows of the Law; and our God expects of us, shall I dare to say, infinitely more than He ever expected of an Aaron or an Eleazar.

Coming therefore to our Motto, as those who are called to be priests unto the Most High God, we ask (1) what is the sphere into which we are introduced by its terms? You will recognise at once that the figurative expressions, taken from the Old Testament, are in connection with the provision that King David made for the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, and that he was detailing all that would be required in regard to the vessels of service, "in the house of the Lord." (1 Chron. xxviii. 13, and 2 Chron. iv. 19. Very wonderful indeed were the provisions which King David made of wood and of stone, of iron and of brass, and very striking are the expressions used concerning these lower materials; they are described as being "without weight," and "in abundance." (1 Chron. xxii. 14, 16.) But there is something almost more marvellous to the thoughtful statistician in the details connected with the gold and the silver brought to

the King for the service of the House of God, or, as we read in another place, for "the service of the House of the Lord." The number of talents of gold that the King prepared, we are told, was 100,000, and of silver, a thousand thousand, besides what he gave of his own proper good" (1 Chron. xxii. 14 and xxix. 3). But the amount represented by these figures is almost inconceivable to our commonplace minds from what we know of those times, and the mining of those times. Nevertheless, such was the amount; and perhaps it has never struck the greater portion of my hearers that it is when we get nearer and nearer to the building of the Holy of Holies, to that place where the Shekinah or manifestation of the Presence of Jehovah was to be revealed, that the most precious metals begin to be employed. Up to that point the materials used had been wood, brass, iron and stone; but as we draw nearer to the representation of the revelation of the Most High, we deal with the precious metals of gold and of silver; and we find that there are to be certain particular "vessels of service," to use the expression given in the building of the temple, which were to be always in the presence of God, for His honour and His glory.

And when we consider what is meant by this Gold, it is exceeding striking. As probably many of my hearers have studied this subject, I need not do more than briefly detail what is understood by this particular word "Gold." We know

that it is one of the most precious, it not the most precious of metals, found, very rarely in some, but in almost every country of the world, we believe, so that it has to be looked for diligently, and can only be obtained by earnest search and labour. It is the most malleable of all metals, so that the gold leaf we make requires literally only one grain for 54 square inches, and it is of the striking thinness of one two hundred thousandth part, or, as some believe, one two hundred and eighty thousandth part of an inch. It is therefore capable of being used in the most remarkable manner of any metal that is known.

Further, it is so ductile that it can be stretched out to such an extent that 1 grain will make 500 feet of gold wire; while it will support a weight of 150lbs., at the rate of .0787 of an inch. It is marvellous when we consider these things, but it is still more remarkable when we remember that it is one of the most difficult metals to purge from alloy, and that great and earnest pains are needed to fit it for its special uses, and to the very last, however much it may be purified, tried and refined, there will still remain a small decimal fraction of alloy, even in the very purest gold that can be made. It has to be purified, as we know, by fire; and it is the one metal of all that will stand the action of fire longer than any other. It melts at about 2016 Fahrenheit, and may long be kept in fusion in a furnace without losing weight or suffering any injury by volatile action; and it is also so pure when brought at

last from the furnace that a man cannot discover with his eye, or with weight or scale, anything but the perfection of gold.

Again, it suffers no change by exposure to air or moisture ; yet it is the softest of all the metals we deal with nearly, probably about the same as lead, and it has to be mixed with alloy to make it serviceable for common use in the world. And remember, we are speaking now of what God chose from the inanimate creation to be the one thing that should be employed for His own special service, where His Glory and Majesty were to be represented and revealed.

What, then (2), under the New Testament system in its spiritual reality, shall we understand by "Gold—Pure Gold—Refined Gold—Perfect Gold — Gold tried with Fire," which God demands, and must have, if the creature is to abide in His Holy Presence, and be made use of for His Holy Service ? And I need hardly say, that man is not so by nature ; he, with his impure, and corrupt and rotten being, is, like the vessels "to dishonour" made of wood and of earth, perishable immediately in the action of fire ; lifeless and valueless in himself, there can be nothing, absolutely nothing, in the natural man, even to the last moment of existence upon earth, that can be acceptable to God and serviceable for His glory. There must be something completely new, and so we hear that wonderful Word of our Blessed Master in the 3rd of Revelation and the 18th verse, when He speaks

to those who have been neglecting their privileges, wasting their life, flattering themselves that they were rich, when they were poor, and miserable and helpless : “ I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire,” I counsel thee to take what God will demand, not by purchase, for thou canst not really purchase, but by the buying, or the acceptance, “ without money and without price.” Ye shall receive at the hands of your Saviour, if ye will take it, the true, the unsearchable riches, the gold, the pure gold, which He prepared for you in His human nature, at the cost of His own most precious life, that He might pour out of His hidden treasures all the riches that man can take, and that God will ever demand. “ I counsel thee,” He says, “ to buy of Me gold tried in the fire,” that shall make thee rich for ever.

And then, when we have received that which is God’s, and which we have no power to make, let us remember that the new nature, the imperishable, the nature that can be submitted to fire, the nature which has now been implanted within us, shall be gradually used of the Master for His own ends. And, we are told, that when we approach the Sanctum, *i.e.*, God’s Most Holy Place, there are certain particular vessels for His Service and Glory. There is that beautiful Candlestick, which carries the light before God, though without any credit to itself, and which is never to be allowed to go out : which is always to be a mighty token to man of the beauty and the Glory of God, of the riches of His love and of His grace. There is to

be that Shewbread Table, upon which is to be exposed the bread as a token of gratitude, but also as a token of life, and as the feeding power for the priests when needing supply. There is to be that Altar of Incense, from which there shall go up unceasingly the sweet-smelling savour, that incense of Prayer that shall make the offerings of the Church well-pleasing and acceptable to God. And upon all that work which might be of perishable material, but which shall not perish because kept by the presence of the Divine, the glories of the Shekinah shall rest, for there shall be a Mercy-seat made of pure gold, and at either end there shall be a cherub which speaks of the privilege of the creature and of the goodness and mercy of God in providing an *ἱλαστήριον* or place of propitiation for the sinner.

All this is what God desires, and all this God must have, if any creature is to be in His Presence, and to see His Glory. All this He must have of "Pure Gold—Refined Gold—Perfect Gold—Gold tried with Fire," and it is to this that I call myself and my flock, that we may be "vessels . . . meet for the Master's use," vessels appointed unto honour.

Come now for a moment and see the antitypical realities of these beautiful figures. What shall we say, as we come into the sphere of my text, is to be the House of our God? There is "a great house," says St. Paul—the Church of the living God; the temple of the great God. It is an outward and visible Church, if you will so consider

it, for a moment ; and in that Church, represented too in this congregation, there are vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour ; vessels of earth and vessels of wood, and they are *perishing*, *perishing* hour by hour, without any chance of restoration ; our outward man and our old man must inevitably perish, for it is of decayable material, and even God will never restore that to anything that is imperishable. What shall we say of those who claim to belong to the temple of God, and who flatteringly say to themselves : “ The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we,” and yet have never received that gift of the new creation ; and they know it perhaps in their hearts ; they have never received that new material which shall never perish. What shall we say of them ? I may not tarry over their case to-day—I can only say to them : For God’s sake sit down with our Motto Text before you this day, and ask yourselves each one—Have I ever yet received even one grain of gold, that God can be satisfied with, when He demands an account of my life ? I beseech you to stop and enquire—Am I placed with a decaying material, with nothing by its side to which my personality can cling ? You must be attached either to the perishable or the imperishable, and it is of your entity, your personality, your “ ego,” that I speak, and in God’s Name I ask : What is your attachment this morning ?

But if, in this house of our God, there are perishable vessels of wood and of earth, there are

also, praised be His Name, vessels of gold and of silver. I tarry not now over the silver, but I beg you to rise to the highest and noblest, and see that you be "Gold—Pure Gold—Refined Gold—Perfect Gold—and tried with Fire" may be—indeed it must be, for the Master will have nothing less than gold purified from alloy; and if, by the goodness of God, you have been made partakers of this imperishable existence (it may be begun this morning if it has never been before); I ask—Would it be no honour for one like oneself to be made of God into a Candlestick to show forth the flame of Light for His honour and glory? There are other qualities of gold which I might mention at this point. There is no metal so beautifully reflective, there is none that gives forth such a glitter, so that even under the action of air and damp it has the power of keeping its brilliancy. And to think that you and I may reflect, if we sit in the presence of the Lord—we are called to reflect the glory of God, and to let men see the brilliant light, which is never to go out—even that of the Majesty of the Most High.

What do you think would be the honour if you were called in God's purpose to be a Table of the Shewbread, made to hold the Bread of Life—that precious Life that giveth power to those who will eat of it?

Or, again, what honour can be compared to that of being an Altar of Incense, ever day by day burning with the needs of humanity, and pouring them out to God in prayer; and to know that He

accepts the sweet-smelling savour of the humble prayer and cry of His servant, because it goes up pleading Christ's merits?

We are called to a "high and holy calling," and I want my people to be "vessels meet for the Master's use." What must then be done, if we are to be serviceable to our God? Remember, I beseech you, this solemn word of St. Paul: "*If—* if a man therefore purge himself." It lies with God to purge the *House*, I cannot do that, it is a work too great, He Himself must purge, and will purge the great House by the action of fire at the coming of Christ—He comes then, once and for ever to see that the whole House, the Church of the living God, is delivered from everything vile, perishable, rotten. That is His work, and He will do it well. Woe! woe! woe! to the vessels of earth and clay, that shall be found unable to bear the action of His fire at that time. But for us on earth this is the day of purging ourselves from the carnal lusts, the low tastes, the foul worldliness, and how shall it be done? "If a man purge himself from these," the youthful lusts, of which St. Paul speaks, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use"; say how, my brother! We know that it is impossible for us to do this solemn work actually by ourselves, but we have to be "willing in the day of His power." We have to cry out, like poor David when he had sinned: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." There are many,

and some perhaps in this Church to-day, who would be glad to be washed and purged like that, because it costs them no pain or trouble ; but St. Paul and St. Peter carry us much further when they say, that we must willingly give ourselves to the fire. And how many of my congregation, and how much have I, ever been willing to submit to the fire ? Oh ! dear brethren, to get to heaven in the best sense of the word costs much. It cost the Saviour much, and it will cost you all you can give ; and how can we be careless, and cold, and content to live as so many are doing, the half-doubting, the half pleasure-seeking carnal life, when the Christ of God has bidden us come to be purged with fire for the Master's service ? He must have "refined gold," He must have "gold tried with fire." Let us put ourselves each one at the disposal of God this day, and say : "Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit." When a man says to God—Purge me with fire, he means—God, my God, come unto me ; for, as I have a few weeks ago tried to show, there is no fire in creation but God, and if God comes to a man He will deal with him completely, for he has ever to be purged, to be made "meet for the Master's use."

Shall we, therefore, give ourselves to the fire, and may the Motto which I have placed before you this day, cause everyone to say—Oh ! God ; cost what it may, let the fire come and try me, take my being and purge away the dross, and make me "meet for the Master's use." And

why should we not be vessels of the purest gold, vessels unto honour? Is it no honour to stand for ever in the presence of the King of Kings, and to hear His wisdom, and to see His beauty? The Queen of Sheba said to Solomon: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," but we are asked to stand every day, every hour, every moment, in the presence of the Great High King of Glory.

Is it no honour to bear His light, and show forth His glory, that as men look at us, they must see something of the Master's brilliancy, of His beauty, of His perfection? Is it no honour for me to carry the Bread, and as an animate and free-willed vessel, be used to distribute Life around? It took a priest's hand in the old dispensation to take the bread from the Table of Shewbread, but now it is the Priest Himself Who is *carrying* the bread, and Who gives it out. It was said, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord"—how much more should it be said to us—Be ye clean, because *ye are* the vessels of the Lord.

Oh! brethren, my poor work is ended, and I have done but little to my subject, yet the heart is full, and the head would say much more; but the text shall speak of the dear Master, and His Holy Spirit, and the tender Father shall accept His poor servant's humble offering this morning, and make you, I trust, every one of you, a vessel of "Gold," of "pure Gold," of "refined

Gold," of Gold that is "perfect" in His eye through His own perfection; a vessel that is "tried with fire." Oh! fret not, fear not to be a vessel of Gold that is "tried with fire," then, God grant it, "meet" for ever "for the Master's use."

1900.

GOD'S CALL.

“See your calling,”

1 Cor. i. 26.

“High,” “Holy,” “Heavenly,”

Phil. iii. 14.

2 Tim. i. 9.

Heb. iii. 1.

“God count you worthy of this calling,”

2 Thess. i. 11.

GOD'S CALL.

TO honourable minds there can be no more effective appeals than those which touch upon the dignity of a man's birth and position. These are almost universally recognized as constituting a claim—an irresistible claim—to character and conduct in accordance therewith; a claim that the man who possesses them as a privilege from God, should walk worthy of the dignity with which God has so abundantly blessed him. "Noblesse oblige," say our neighbours, the French. Shall I venture to paraphrase this utterance, and to say that "the claim to nobility is worse than a form, unless the life is strictly in accordance with the claim." This is almost universally recognized as a law which binds men in temporal matters. There has been passing over the nation, in this democratic age, the more and more universal demand, that those who occupy high stations in the land, ~~and have the privilege of wealth attached to them,~~ shall walk worthy of the honour which has been

bestowed upon them, accidentally, as men say—for the glory of God, as we Christians should say, and for the benefit of their fellow men.

Who then will deny that the same law should apply in the spiritual as in the temporal domain?

It is on the strength of these thoughts that I would this day appeal to myself and my people for “high, holy, heavenly” lives, because we claim and profess to be Christians. And as we profess to be Christians, we assert for ourselves, however little we may remember it, that we have received the new birth from God, implanted by the power of the Holy Ghost; and that by that new birth we claim to be “children of God”; “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” and the “children of God” should surely walk in some sense worthy of their Father. “Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory,” says St. Paul in 1 Thess. ii. 12, and if we do believe that it becomes us, at least in some senses, day by day to walk worthy of Him “who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son,” then the least that we can do is to discover by what law and under what powers we are constrained to live holy lives as the children of God.

And the answer is brought before us very clearly in the fact that we have received such a calling. And the call of God is upon every man who “names the name of Christ” that he should

“depart from iniquity,” that he should “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” that he should “adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things,” that he should live theoretically, and as far as possible practically, up to the standard which God has given us in the person of His own Son; and because He, our God and Father, is holy, and has given us a holy example in Christ Jesus, we too should be “holy in all manner of conversation.”

All this I believe is appended to the idea of our being called of God in Christ Jesus; and I therefore ask your attention this morning to the remarkable way in which this word “calling” is used in the Holy Book, so that it may apply itself to our own persons, position, and possibilities from this time forth for evermore.

And (1) has it ever occurred to you how often this expression appears? We may safely assert that not less than a hundred times the thoughts connected with the words “call,” “calling,” “called” are to be found, either in the word itself (Gr. *κλησις*) or in the compounds connected therewith; and this word is also the central thought connected with salvation, with the spiritual life of those who are saved, and with the eternal glory which is to be revealed in them hereafter. So central is the thought, that even the word “Church” in the Greek (*ἐκκλησία*) is nothing but the expression of this idea—the “call-

ing out" of God, and the "called out" by God; and the Church only exists on these conditions—that she received "the call" from God, and that recognizing the call, she became "the called out one"; there is the Divine action and the human response.

Moreover, when we proceed to consider the provision that is made for our spiritual life and power, we are dealing at once with a kindred word. The title of "Paraclete" (Gr. παράκλητος), which is given both to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit, is translated, concerning the Holy Ghost, as the "Comforter," and concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, as the "Advocate," which is only the Latin form of Paraclete or "called unto." But there is this distinction, while the Church (ἐκκλησία) is the one "called out," the Advocate or the Comforter is the one "called upon" or "called in" by man, to *advocate*, to render him assistance in the hour of his need. We plead with the Saviour and the Holy Ghost to appear on our behalf, the One in the presence of the eternal God, the Other in the presence of our enemies, and we bring our personal needs before Them that they may be supplied by the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In each case there is included the thought of response to the call. The Church obeys the Lord's call to salvation and service; the *Paraclete* gives heed to the Church's call for comfort and support. The One hears the *calling-out*; the Other hears the *calling-upon*; but in each case, and therefore, in every part of the

Christian's life upon earth, the idea of the "calling" is the paramount or prominent feature of the whole.

It is essential to notice that this "calling" has invariably originated with God, and not with man. I know that in Rom. x. 13, we read: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"; but the Apostle proceeds immediately very carefully to show that no man can call *upon* God, until he has heard the call *from* God; and that by hearing cometh blessing from God, and faith springs through hearing the Gospel; so that the man who calls upon the name of the Lord is always the man who has heard the call, who has accepted it, and become part of the "called out one," which constitutes the Church. Hence, no man can "call upon" God who is not "accepted in the Beloved," and made "partaker of the heavenly calling" in Christ Jesus.

And, ~~moreover~~, this high calling, to become effectual, must not only originate with God, but must be so pressed in through the Person of the Lord Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost, that it changes the man altogether, so that he may proceed to call upon his Advocate in Heaven, or his Deliverer upon earth, with the certainty that they will appear for his deliverance, and that the Father will hear and bless, because "the caller" comes in the right spirit and the right way.

But this fact, that the call originates invariably with God and not with man, overthrows altogether the thought of the careless and the godless,

that they may come at the last moment of their lives and cry to God for mercy, and be certain to be accepted, because God has said : " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Oh ! my brother, if I speak to such a one this morning, I would bid you remember this—that a rejected God will reject the sinner at last, and that it is God Himself who has spoken through the wise man, Solomon, in Prov. i. 24-26 : " Because I have called and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh." And again and again, the same solemn words are uttered ; in Isaiah lxxv. 12, and lxxvi. 4, in Zech. vii. 13, &c., and elsewhere, the Almighty God, the Great Jehovah, the Everlasting True One, who desires nothing so much as the salvation of the sinner, has yet felt Himself compelled by His Holiness to declare, that a rejected call leads to a call being rejected at the last, when it comes too late from the sinner's lips.

Moreover, the man who would call for mercy at the last moment has totally mistaken the holy character of the call that can bring blessing to the sinner. We, who believe in the calling of God, have this comfort, that we may look to One whose faithfulness is pledged, and whose unchangeableness is an assured fact, and that He cannot draw back from his willingness to receive

us. But the sinner has no such standpoint, because he has never appealed to the faithfulness and unchangeableness of God. St. Paul can say to the Romans, ch. xi. 29: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He can say in 1 Cor. i. 9: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord." He can say to the Thessalonians in his first epistle, ch. v. 24: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it"; and the believer, who takes our texts aright, looks into the face of God and apprehends this fact—that he deals with the faithful One, who never can lie; and having called, He is pledged to receive the called one, if only he will obey the call.

But then, God has not only deigned to prove His own faithfulness, but He has shown through the ages His yearning over man by the way in which He has manifested this call. He has made use of His own voice and His Son's to call men to Himself. He called Moses "out of the midst of the bush" (Ex. iii. 4). "He called unto him out of the mountain" (Ex. xix. 3), &c. He called unto the children of Israel with His own voice, and it was they who refused to hear Him, because He was too holy for them. He called by the Prophets again and again throughout the ages, and because men thought that they could despise the call, at last that holy Voice was withdrawn, and for many hundreds of years they heard nothing at all of the Lord's voice. At

length the Lord Jesus Christ appeared, and St. Paul can say : " God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son," and Jesus Christ stood forth before the world, and called with a yearning that nothing could repress; and He did not even " cry," lest it should seem too loud to men's hearts, but He pleaded with tender, loving words: "*Come unto Me, Come unto Me.*" It is the God of Heaven, Who is the Holy One, Whom men could not hear in His Majesty without His blasting the sinner, Who comes down to them in the Person of " the Man Christ Jesus," and who pleads with them as " Emmanuel," to be blessed of the Lord. And when even this did not seem to be really acceptable, God in His infinite mercy chose other indirect means by which possibly to touch the heart of the sinner. If God's calls are too direct and solemn, possibly man may listen to the working of grace in Providence; so we are told in Gal. i. 15, that it is the *Grace* of God that calls man to be blessed, and to have His Son Jesus Christ revealed to him. We are told again that it is God who speaks to us in *the Gospel*, as put before us in 2 Thess. ii. 14. Again, in 2 Peter i. 3, we are told that it is God who appeals to us " by His own Glory and Virtue " (Revised Version), as if He were determined that there should be one ceaseless voice, like the ringing of sweet bells from Heaven above, that should compel men to hear the Holy God calling

them to holiness; even as in Ps. xix. we are told concerning the great works of creation: "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." So if men would but listen to the voice of God's Grace, to the voice of God's Love in the Gospel, to the voice of God's Glory and Virtue, in addition to the voice which came straight from Heaven when He spake to Moses, and the voice which came to us by Jesus Christ, they would find that He is always pleading with the children of men.

Do you see your calling? and what will you say of it when you hear the words of God in Rom. x. 21: "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people," saying, "Come unto Me" and be blessed? There is the calling of God in Christ Jesus by the Spirit, ever yearning for the sons of men, saying, Will ye be blessed by the God who hath made you?

But then we come to the solemn and all-important enquiry, which you have a right to put to the preacher this morning:—To what end, or for what end, does the Lord Jehovah thus deign to call to the sons and daughters of men? Here we are met by such an amazing mass of magnificent tokens of God's love, and wisdom and glory, as utterly to overwhelm the human understanding. I am conscious that if I could even attempt to bring before you a list of the truths in this Book, which give us some idea of God's glorious calling in Christ Jesus, no large proportion of men could

grapple with the things that should be said. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit"; and as we read in Deut. xxix. 29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words" of God's revelation, whether it be Law or Gospel. We therefore had better look for a few moments at some of the things for which this "High, Holy, Heavenly" calling is given to the children of men.

In the first place, in St. Luke v. 32, we find the blessed Saviour saying to man: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." That is the one starting point of all God's purposes for man, wheresoever the call of grace, mercy, or peace is heard; that is the original calling of each man, who has a certain part to perform for himself in obeying that call. But when we pass on to the riches which God is prepared to bestow, then indeed we ought to be filled with amazement. In 1 Cor. i. 2, St. Paul says even to those who are not living high lives, whom he speaks of as "carnal," that they are "called to be saints."

My ~~brethren~~, there is not a man on earth that ever heard God calling that was not meant to become holy from that very moment. How *can* you live unholy lives, how *can* you set your faces

to sin, when Almighty God Himself has appeared before you, telling you that if you listen to Him you must be holy? Next, in 1 Cor. i. 9, we are told: "God is faithful, by whom ye were *called* unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord." In Gal. v. 13, St. Paul says: "Ye have been *called* unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." In Col. iii. 15: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are *called* in one body." What a marvellous list we have already of benefits and blessings which God purposes to bestow upon those who will hear His call! In 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14, we are chosen or *called* "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are called, the Apostle says, in 1 Tim. vi. 12 to "eternal life." We are called, he tells us, in Heb. ix. 15, to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance." We are called, as God tells us, in the first Epistle by St. Peter, ch. ii. 9, "out of darkness into His marvellous light"; we are called in vv. 20 and 21, to suffer patiently; we are called 1 Pet. iii. 9, to render blessing for railing; in ch. v. 10, we are "called unto His eternal glory"; in Rev. xix. 9, we are "called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb"; and blessed, blessed, blessed are the called.

Who shall venture now to doubt that God loves the children of men when the voice of His calling

is heard among us? And men are living, as they do, in the midst of trial and trouble, and imagining that this is the normal condition of humanity; they curse their God, and forget that He is love, and that all the time there is provided a free salvation which every man can take, or reject, for the call is going out to the sons and daughters of Adam to be blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

(2) But if this be the calling of God (and it does not hang on any fickle utterance of man, but on the God who is unchangeable, and whose Word can never be withdrawn), is not your minister justified in making his appeal to all who hear, to yield to the calling of God, and to recognize that they are living far below their dignity, far below their profession, if they do not walk worthy of the "high, holy, heavenly" calling which they have received? Surely it is unworthy of their station if those in high places demean themselves to dishonour their position. It is worse by ten thousand times if we who are called Christians should be living in a careless manner, in rejection of the calling, or in any sense below the dignity of our provision and privilege. Think what God has called us to be. In Rom. ix. 23, we are described as "vessels of mercy"; we are called in 1 Thess. iv. 7, "unto holiness," and warned to abstain from uncleanness: we are called in 1 Peter v. 10, not merely to the eternal glory of God, but to be "stablished, strengthened,

and settled," and to walk in Christ now, every day that we live upon earth.

What then can the minister say of the high calling of God which is upon himself and his people, but that it is indeed "high, holy, and heavenly." And these three remarkable expressions which are attached to the word "calling" are exactly in the right order, as it seems to us. In Phil. iii. 14, you read that St. Paul speaks of his calling in Christ Jesus as "high," (Gr. *ἄνω*.) There is a dispute among the learned whether the word should be applied to the *origin* or the *purpose* of his calling. We had better take it in both senses. The calling is "from above" first, as we read in St. John iii. 3 (margin), and it lifts us up; so when St. Paul speaks of his calling being high, he may mean that it springs from above, therefore it is high; but he would also have his readers remember that it draws upwards, and so lifts into into a high position. The calling comes from Him, and Him alone, who is "the High and lofty One inhabiting eternity, whose Name is holy," and at once we see the appropriateness of the second expression that the high calling of God is a *holy* calling. It is "holy," because it comes from the Holy One Himself in glory; it is "holy" in every possible sense of the word, which implies that its very essence, and its effect upon the receiver, is holiness. Hence it is clear that the calling is also "heavenly," which again implies its descent and its aim. Heb. iii. 1 speaks of us as being with the Lord Jesus "partakers of the

heavenly calling." Here again the commentator, like Dean Alford, for instance, disputes with himself whether the calling is to be taken as heavenly in origin or heavenly in purpose, and again he adds that it is best to take the word in both meanings: "κλησις, (he says on Heb. iii. 1), as usual, of the invitation, or summons, of God calling men to His glory in Christ—and hence of the state which is entered by them in pursuance of that calling—a calling made from Heaven (chap. xii. 25)—or—the calling which proposes a heavenly reward—whose inheritance is in Heaven."

So we come to the conclusion that our calling is indeed *high*, from Heaven, to lift us high. It is *holy*, to make us like God, because He is holy. It is *heavenly*, in its origin, that it may take us home to Heaven; and the man who would apprehend his "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" must know that he cannot do low things because his birthplace is high; he cannot do unholy things because he is partaker of the holiness of his God; he cannot grovel here upon earth, because his home is in Heaven, and the life that he lives must be in accordance with his dignity.

(3) It is to this that I invoke myself and my people, and I ask you, and myself, now, in conclusion, to realize what marvellous position and privilege is ours—to look into our calling, and to remember that the calling of God only becomes experimentally our calling when we have heard the call and entered into the position which God would bestow upon us by virtue of that call.

There is some doubt as to whether the word "calling" in the last part of our Motto—"God count you worthy of this calling" (2 Thess. i. 11) applies to the action of God, or the position of man; I think that there is a double play on the words—It is God calling us to enter into our vocation, or position, and when we take our calling, we shall then only be one with Him who deigned to speak from Heaven to make us worthy of it. "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling." In what way then can men realize, and apprehend, and enjoy their high calling in Christ Jesus? The answer is plain—you are called by God to do your part because He has done His; and He is ever ready to do more where it is required of Him; but He has already accomplished the full work of providing for your needs, and you have only to take in God's calling, and as you take it in you become partakers of His calling. Do not think that it is necessary to change your *earthly* calling. In 1 Cor. vii. 15-24, you find the Apostle playing upon this in a remarkable way. He says: "God hath called us to peace." "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it." . . . "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man; likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." Therefore,

you need not change your occupation, you need not change your position in life, if that position is an honourable one, to obey the call of God. Stay where you are, but be faithful therein, according to the power of the Lord upon you.

Then comes the call of the Lord to activity : "I beseech you," says St. Paul in Ephes. iv. 1, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation (or calling) wherewith ye are called," for he says in v. 4, "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Then, according to St. Peter, you should recognize that He "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light," that you may, as in 2 Pet. i. 10, 11, "give diligence to make your calling and election sure : . . For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

God has given the calling ; it is for us to do our part. For a man to take up the habits of the world, and try to satisfy himself with taking his ease, and forgetting for what his life is given, is to walk unworthy of his calling. Oh ! by virtue of God's love, by virtue of God's Son, by virtue of God's Spirit, by virtue of the fact that you call yourselves Christians, I make my earnest appeal to you this day that ye "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," so that you will live from to-day "High, Holy, Heavenly" lives. Use your call-

ing, and as you use it, I do pray God that He will "count you worthy of this calling"; but let your part be this: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press, press, *press* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

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